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September/October 2020

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**CHOIR & ORGAN OFFERS**  
Villette's Messe 'Da Pacem' score and CD  
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## Audition Dates

Application due December 1.

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## 'Sheffield Towers'

Sheffield Cathedral's decision, announced on 22 July, to disband its choir raises some of the issues that Anthony Trollope revelled in writing about 150 years ago – theology, conservatism, attitudes towards music (and musicians), and above all, power.

Cathedrals bear responsibility towards the whole city and diocese in a way that individual churches do not. Like all cities, Sheffield is diverse in many respects in, for example, nearly a fifth of its population identifying as BAME; one in four people living in poverty; and, with two universities, having a 'bulge' of 19- to 24-year-olds. These are demographics rarely represented in the Church of England as a whole. So it is not surprising – in fact, it is laudable – if these groups are among those now included (even if belatedly) in the Cathedral's overall outreach programme.

However, the Cathedral's statement says: 'There needs to be significant change ... in order to create a music department and choir ready for the exciting future of the mixed urban community in which we live and work.' This seems to be placing on the music department a huge responsibility that might perhaps more fairly be laid at the door of the Dean and Chapter. First, who says that BAME, poorer or younger people can't appreciate, or are put off by, Anglican cathedral music? Second, the music is likely to be far more accessible to non-congregants than Anglican liturgy and ritual itself – is the Cathedral also looking to change the latter? Third, if the ethos and structures of the Cathedral are open and diverse, it is unlikely that the music alone would deter people from worshipping there. And fourth, following a



review of the music department last year, in March 2020 the Cathedral formally appointed a director of music who had been acting director of music for at least six months. If his approach did not match what the Cathedral thought it was looking for, yet he was still appointed, there is something seriously amiss with the Cathedral's interview and appointment process.

The Cathedral may genuinely feel the need to provide a wider variety of

music to reflect a broader cross-section of people, but that doesn't negate what has been on offer so far. Traditional cathedral music is uplifting for many, whatever their backgrounds, and in disbanding the choir, Sheffield has thrown the baby out with the bath water – particularly if, as it says, it is 'committed to retaining the distinctive choral life of an Anglican cathedral, drawing fully on our long heritage of music-making.' How does that work exactly, when you've just dismissed the very people who have been maintaining that heritage? For a cathedral whose strapline is 'A Place for All People', it seems short-sighted not to seek a more inclusive way forward – one that affirms established musical traditions as well as being open to new ones. What is to prevent the Cathedral retaining the choir and its 'distinctive' Anglican choral heritage alongside introducing other forms of worship led by other musicians?

Sadly, it seems that what has happened at Sheffield reflects less on the choir and more on the way the matter has been handled. Trollope knew what he was talking about.

*Maggie Hamilton*

*Choir & Organ shines a global spotlight on two distinctive fields of creativity, celebrating inventiveness and excellence in all their forms.*

We aim to inspire our readers through giving a platform to conductors, organists, composers, and choirs of every kind; and by showcasing the imaginative craft of pipe organ building across the centuries, critiquing new organs and tackling ethics in restoring historic instruments.

Specialist writers appraise new editions and recordings of standard repertoire and works fresh from the composer's pen, while our news and previews chart the latest developments in a changing world and present opportunities to become involved.

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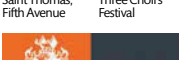
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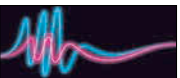
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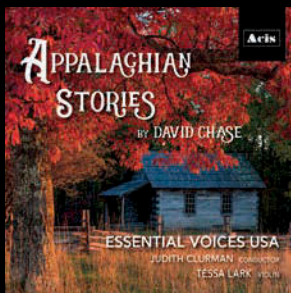
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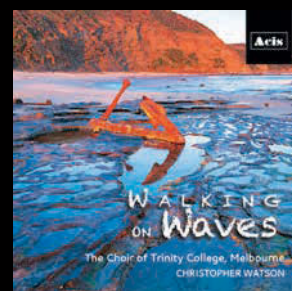
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Choir & Organ, ISSN 0968-7262, (USPS 7314), is published monthly by MA Music, Leisure & Travel Ltd, St. Jude's Church, Dulwich Road, London SE24 0PB, United Kingdom.

The US annual subscription price is \$84.99. Airfreight and mailing in the USA by agent named WN Shipping USA, 156-15, 146th Avenue, 2nd Floor, Jamaica, NY 11434, USA. Periodicals postage paid at Jamaica NY 11431. US Postmaster: Send address changes to Choir & Organ, WN Shipping USA, 156-15, 146th Avenue, 2nd Floor, Jamaica, NY 11434, USA. Subscription records are maintained at MA Music, Leisure & Travel Ltd, Unit A, Buildings 1-5 Dinton Business Park, Catherine Ford Road, Dinton, Salisbury, Wiltshire SP3 5HZ.

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Printed in the UK by Pensord, Pontllanfraith, Blackwood, NP12 2YA  
Newstrade distribution by Seymour 020 7429 4000



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## MANDER ORGANS LTD CEASES TRADING

THE LONDON-BASED MANDER ORGANS closed its doors on 27 July, posting an announcement on its website:

Mander Organs Ltd profoundly regrets to announce that, owing to cashflow difficulties and the inability to secure sufficient work, the company has ceased trading as of Monday 27.vii.2020. The management and staff would like to express their gratitude to our clients and friends for the loyalty and support they have given over the years, and particularly in the last few difficult months. Our affairs have been placed in the hands of an independent insolvency practitioner, Insolve Plus Ltd, to whom all enquiries should be addressed from now onwards ([www.insolveplus.com](http://www.insolveplus.com)).

The company was founded by Noel Mander (a descendant of the 18th-century organ builder George Pike England), who started working alone in 1936. In 1947 the firm moved to a site in Bethnal Green, east London, where it remained and flourished. In 1978 Mander was awarded an OBE for services to British organ building, which had included the rebuilding of the Willis organ in St Paul's Cathedral, completed the previous year.

Noel Mander retired in 1983, and the firm was then led by his son, John Pike Mander, who greatly expanded the firm's remit in building new organs worldwide. The firm's notable instruments include: the Church of St Ignatius Loyola, New York City; the Royal Albert Hall, London; the Queen's Organ in Westminster Abbey; Peachtree Road UMC, Atlanta, Georgia; Chestnut Hill Presbyterian Church, Philadelphia; Sydney Grammar School, Australia; Stavanger Cathedral, Norway; St George's, Penang, Malaysia; and St Michael's Cathedral, Kobe, as well as eight other organs in Japan.

In 2002 Mander Organs was awarded the 'Queen's Award for Enterprise', presented to the entire workforce.

On the retirement of John Pike Mander in 2018, the firm was transferred to an Employee Ownership Trust, with each member



LARINE JAMBECHT

▲ The IV/68 Mander organ in the Church of St Ignatius Loyola, New York City

of the company having a stakeholding. Former head designer Geoff McMahon succeeded as managing director and head voicer Michael Blighton became tonal director.

## IN PRAISE OF VAN EYCK



JAN VAN EYCK'S FAMOUS ALTAR TRIPTYCH in St Bavo's Cathedral, Ghent will form the backcloth to the world premiere of a new work by Arvo Pärt. On 22 September, Philippe Herreweghe conducts Collegium Vocale Gent in *Für Jan van Eyck* in front of a live audience in the cathedral. The work was inspired by the Flemish painter's masterpiece, also known as *Adoration of the Mystic Lamb*. It is scored for mixed choir and organ, and is based on the Agnus Dei from the composer's *Berliner Messe* (1990). Commissioned by the City of Ghent for the Flanders Festival, the work contributes towards the 'Year of Van Eyck', a celebration of this master of early northern renaissance art. Other tributes to the artist included the largest exhibition ever of the artist's work, held in February and March at the city's Museum of Fine Arts (MSK); a 360-degrees digital tour of the exhibition can now be seen, free of charge, until the end of the year at [bit.ly/32Xfu01](http://bit.ly/32Xfu01).

◀ Inspiring: the triptych in St Bavo's Cathedral, Ghent



# CATHEDRAL DISBANDS CHOIR

IN A REVAMP OF MUSIC at Sheffield Cathedral, the Dean and Chapter have decided to disband its choir.

The announcement, posted on the Cathedral's website on 22 July, said:

'For some years the Dean and Chapter have been looking carefully at the music offer of Sheffield Cathedral. They have come to the conclusion that there needs to be significant change. This is in order to create a Music Department and Choir ready for the exciting future of the mixed urban community in which we live and work.

'With the Diocesan Bishop, Chapter are appointing a new Canon Precentor in August, responsible for Cathedral worship and music. They hope this will bring increased creativity and stability.

'Following a review of the Music Department in 2019, Sheffield Cathedral Chapter has decided that a completely fresh start is needed. As a result, Chapter concluded this is the right time to close the current Cathedral Choir.

'This decision has not been easy because it will directly impact several colleagues and indirectly impact us all in our close-knit community. However, we believe this is in the best interests of the long-term mission of the Cathedral.

'The Canon Precentor will lead the recruitment of a new music team and the development of a fresh vision for our worship. For some time, Chapter has been considering a new model for Anglican choral life here, with a renewed ambition for engagement and inclusion. They recognise that this will require flexibility, imagination and experiment.

'Chapter is committed to retaining the distinctive choral life of an Anglican cathedral, drawing fully on our long heritage of music-making. They look forward to working with our partners throughout our City and Diocese to make this renewed vision a reality under God.'

Choristers are drawn from schools across the city, but recruitment net will now be spread wider for singers to join one of potentially several new choirs. The Cathedral's three lay clerks have lost their posts.

The disbanding of the choir has caused uproar, with accusations of bullying and lack of consultation.

Over the last five years the Cathedral has had a quick turnover of Masters of Music (MoM), with Joshua Hales taking over as acting MoM in 2016 following the departure of Neil Taylor, Thomas Corns being appointed in 2017, then Joshua Stephens being acting MoM in 2019 before being appointed MoM in March this year. Stephens resigned in June. The Cathedral is now looking to appoint a new MoM as well as a new Canon Precentor.



▲ Looking for a 'fresh start' in music: Sheffield Cathedral

## IN BRIEF

The Musicians' Union has now distributed more than £1m from its **Hardship and Crisis Funds** to MU members suffering financial hardship through loss of work due to Covid-19. A significant contribution to the Fund has been made by PPL, the UK's music licensing company for over 110,000 performers and recording rights-holders. Other monies have been raised through crowdfunding, individual donations, and virtual concerts. The Fund is still open for applications: [musiciansunion.org.uk](http://musiciansunion.org.uk)

The **National Youth Choirs of Great Britain** (NYCGB) has announced autumn audition dates for its various choirs. Auditions booking for the National Youth Training Choir, National Youth Boys' Choir and National Youth Girls' Choir open on Tuesday 8 Sep until Monday 19 Oct and can be booked online at [nycgb.org.uk](http://nycgb.org.uk). Auditions take place via Zoom from Thursday 22 Oct to Tuesday 10 Nov 2020.

**Genesis Sixteen** – The Sixteen's free young artists' scheme for 18-23 year olds – has announced its 10th cohort: (sopranos) Hannah Ambrose, Hermione Juniper Leitch, Frannie Millar, Molly O'Toole, Rosa Sparks, Sophie Williams, Lydia Wonham; (altos) Izzi Blain, Matthew Farrell, Lucy Gibbs, Lauren Osmond, Lydia Ward; (tenors) Tim Burton, James Edgeler, Max Robbins, Henry Strutt, Nathaneal Thomas-Atkin; (basses) Ross Cumming, Dominic Felts, Adam Reaney, Henry Saywell, Matthew Welch. Applications are invited for the **Conducting Scholarship** 20/21; details at [bit.ly/3hKV8es](http://bit.ly/3hKV8es).

On 1 Aug, Voces8 launched **Live from London**, a new online festival of live vocal music. The festival will be broadcast every Saturday evening at 7pm for 10 weeks and features top vocal ensembles including The Sixteen, I Fagiolini, and The Swingles. A portion of all tickets sold will be put towards funding for grassroots music education. Full details at [bit.ly/2Dkrtu3](http://bit.ly/2Dkrtu3).

## CALLING YOUNG COMPOSERS



THE NATIONAL YOUTH CHOIRS OF GREAT BRITAIN (NYCGB) invites applications for its Young Composers Scheme 2021.

Four composers aged 18-29 will receive a fully funded, year-long programme of professional development including residential courses, creative retreats, workshops, peer and professional mentoring and performance showcases. Details at [bit.ly/2EXwoSh](http://bit.ly/2EXwoSh).

**Closing date: 5pm, Friday 4 September.**



## IN BRIEF

**Sally Cavender** is to step down as performance music director and vice-chairman of Faber Music on 1 Dec 2020; Sam Wigglesworth is to succeed her as performance music director. Cavender has been with the company for almost four decades.

**Commotio's** new CD of choral music by Francis Pott reached no.5 in the Official Specialist Classical Charts and no.20 in the Classical Album Charts. The choir was founded in 1999 by Matthew Berry to promote neglected contemporary choral repertoire.

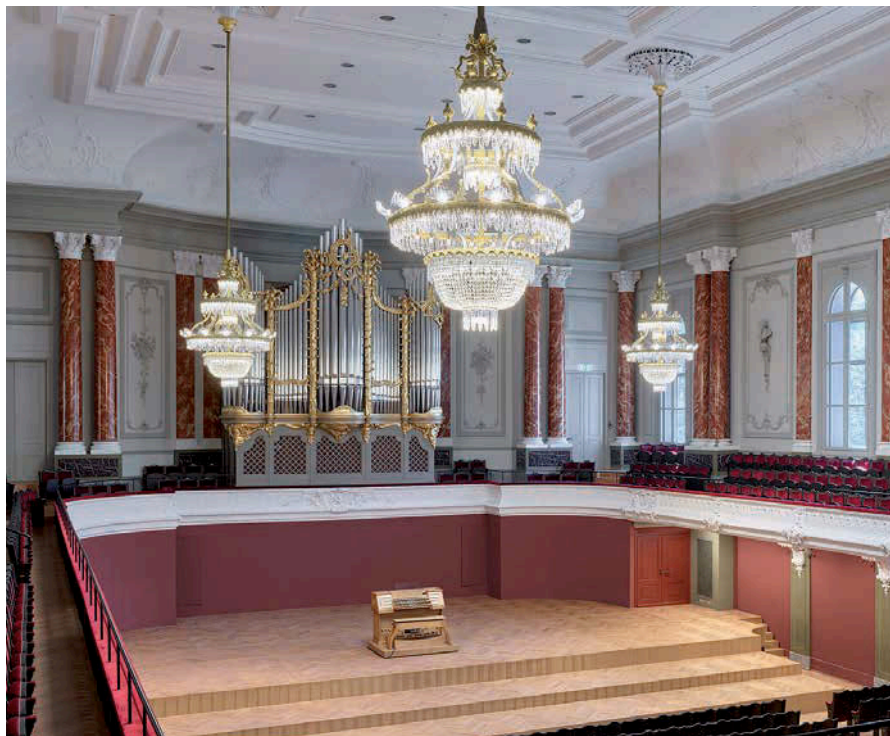
David Skinner and his vocal ensemble Alamire have released the sheet music of the new edition of John Sheppard's **Media vita in morte sumus**, with 100 percent of donations going to the NHS. Alamire released this digital-only EP on 17 Jul, and it spent a week in the Top 10 of Apple Music's Classical Chart. The EP is released on Inventa Records, a specialist early music sub-label for Resonus Classics. [alamire.co.uk](http://alamire.co.uk)

Sheet music publisher and distributor **Hal Leonard Europe** (HLE) has announced it is now selling digital sheet music via its [musicroom.com](http://musicroom.com) webstore. Over 150,000 titles are already available, including some pieces from the ABRSM syllabus. HLE has also announced a long-term commercial agreement with RSL, an award-making body in music examination, vocational training and specialist performing arts.

The classical music streaming service **Primephonic** is now offering digital CD booklets via its app. [primephonic.com](http://primephonic.com)

**Universal Music Group** has announced a global partnership with the Italian music publishing, recording and artists agency Sugar, which has a commitment to promoting Italian music and artists.

## BASEL FÊTES NEW ORGAN



© STADTCASINO BASEL | FOTOGRAFIE © ROMAN WENENH

▲ The new Metzler organ in the Basel Stadtcasino's Musiksaal will be inaugurated on 4 September

THE NEW METZLER ORGAN IN THE STADTCASINO BASEL will be inaugurated on 4 September in a gala concert featuring Iveta Apkalna, Vincent Dubois and Thomas Trotter performing music by Widor, J.S. Bach, Kalninš, Harris, Bridge and Rossini, alongside improvisations.

The concert marks the opening of Orgelfestival Basel, which runs over two long weekends in September. During the first weekend, the organ will be demonstrated in a series of hour-long concerts (5 Sep) by organists from the region, starting at 11am and finishing at 11pm. A family afternoon (6 Sep) opens with the telling of a children's fairy tale to organ accompaniment, which is followed by a presentation of organ pieces written for children by students at the Musikhochschulen in Duben and Basel. In the evening, Dubois and Trotter are joined by Martin Sander (organ) and the Sinfonieorchester Basel, conducted by Ivor Bolton, for a concert titled 'Fluch, Tod und Erlösung' ('Curse, Death and Redemption'). Trotter will play Saint-Saëns's 'Organ' Symphony, and Dubois gives the world premiere of the Concerto for Organ and Orchestra by French composer Guillaume Connesson (b.1970).

On 18 September, the second festival weekend opens with an evening concert of French and Swiss music by Ravel, Saint-Saëns, Roussel, Honegger and Poulenc, performed by Sander and Olivier Latry with the Kammerorchester Basel under the direction of Pierre Bleuse. The Saturday evening concert (19 Sep), 'Orgel trifft Tango, Jazz und Balkanmusik', shows the organ in a different light at the hands of Thilo Muster, Roger Hélou and Nikolai Geršak alongside dance bands. The festival ends with a concert on 20 September featuring choirs from across the region, conducted by Maija Gschwind, in works by Britten and Kodály, and the Swiss premiere of Peteris Vasks's *Bibel/Veni Domine*, with Iveta Apkalna performing the organ part.

Since 22 June, Switzerland has permitted events with up to 1,000 people to take place, with events involving more than 1,000 people allowed after 31 August.

The Stadtcasino Basel reopened its doors in August after a four-year programme of restoration and extension by architects Herzog and De Meuron. The four-manual organ has influences of French symphonic and English town hall instruments. [ofsb.ch](http://ofsb.ch)



# WORLD CHOIR GAMES HEAD EAST

THE 2022 WORLD CHOIR GAMES will take place in the Republic of Korea.

The city of Gangneung, located in the province of Gangwon, is the second Korean city to host the world's largest international choir competition, the first being Busan in 2002. From 4-14 July 2022, choral singers from around the world will come together for 11 days of competitions, singing together, and cultural exchange.

Gangneung is located by the sea with a mountainous backcloth; its Olympic Park and Ice Arena were venues for the 2018 Winter Olympics and will also host the Winter Youth Olympics in 2024. Interkultur president Günter Titsch said: 'I'm very proud that the World Choir Games will become a part of the province's Olympic history – this will be a unique experience for the singers from all over the world.'

The 11th World Choir Games, which was originally scheduled to take place in Flanders this year, was postponed to 2021 because of the Covid-19 pandemic, so there will be two World Choir Games in two consecutive years. 'This is a new challenge that we never had before,' said Titsch, 'but ... I am sure that



▲ Gangneung, in the Republic of Korea, hosts the 12th World Choir Games in 2022

choirs from all over the world will take the opportunity to participate in the 11th and 12th World Choir Games and finally share the stages of the world again.'

More information about the 11th World Choir Games Flanders 2021 can be found at [bit.ly/32Ssh3E](https://bit.ly/32Ssh3E); for the 12th World Choir Games Gangneung 2022, visit [wcg2022.com](https://wcg2022.com).

## RECITAL ROUND-UP

Despite so many recitals having been cancelled, the following are expected still to take place, but readers are strongly advised to check beforehand.

**Alton, St Lawrence at 8pm**  
David Hill (13 Oct) 01420 543628

**Arundel Cathedral at 7.30pm**  
D'Arcy Trinkwon (17 Sep, 1, 15, 29 Oct) 01903 882297

**Brighton, St Bartholomew's at 1.10pm**  
D'Arcy Trinkwon (27 Sep)  
07971 024 889

**Brighton, The Meeting House, Univ. of Sussex at 12 noon**  
D'Arcy Trinkwon (30 Sep, 28 Oct)  
01273 678 217

**Chester Cathedral at 1.10pm**  
Jane Watts (24 Sep) 01244 500959

**Dursley, St James-the-Great at 11am**  
Martin Bell (26 Sep)  
01453 549280

**Grimsby Minster at 11.30am**  
Peter King (3 Sep) 01472 277277

**Hereford Cathedral at 1.15pm**  
Peter King (15 Sep) 01432 374238

**Liverpool Cathedral at 3pm**  
Ian Tracey (17 Oct) 0151 709 6271

**Liverpool, St George's Hall at 12.45pm**  
Ian Tracey (8 Sep, 13 Oct)  
0151 225 6909

**London E1, Christ Church Spitalfields at 7.30pm**  
Tom Bell (28 Sep), Robert Woolley (26 Oct)  
020 7377 2440

**London N1, St John the Evangelist, Duncan Terrace at 7.30pm**  
Isabelle Demers (24 Oct)  
020 7226 1218

**London SW1, Methodist Central Hall at 3pm**  
Gerard Brooks (20 Sep), Frederick Stocken (18 Oct) 020 7654 2000

**London W1, Grosvenor Chapel at 1.10pm**

Richard Hobson (8 Sep), Simon Williams (22 Sep), Robin Walker (6 Oct), Alexander Pott (20 Oct)  
020 7499 1684

**London W1, St George's, Hanover Square at 1.10pm**

Katy Silverman (1 Sep), William Fox (15 Sep), TBA (29 Sep), Mark Brafield (13 Oct), Samuel Bristow (27 Oct) 020 7629 0874

**London W2, St Mary Magdalene at 7.30pm**  
Adrian Gunning (17 Sep)  
020 7289 1818

**Oxford, Merton College Chapel at 1.15pm**

Peter King (15 Oct), Benjamin Nicholas (22 Oct) 01865 276310



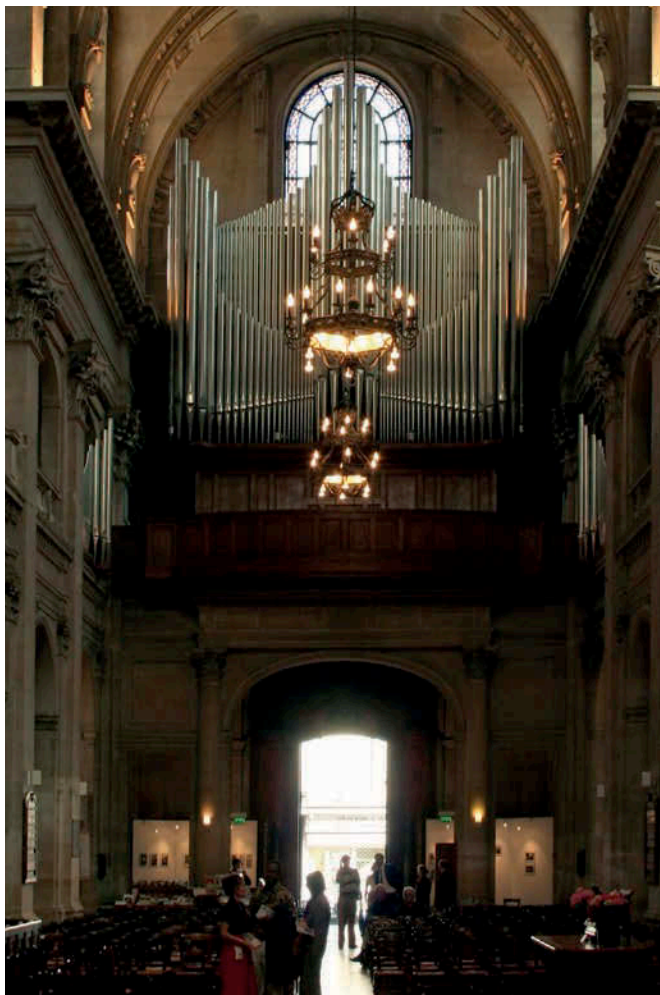
### CELEBRATING FRENCH MUSIC

Inspired by Vierne's 150th centenary, D'Arcy Trinkwon is giving a series of recitals in Arundel Cathedral (pictured). 'Visions fantastiques' showcases works by Vierne and those he inspired, including the four major works of his pupil Duruflé.

Meanwhile, Adrian Gunning gives the annual Duruflé memorial recital (17 Sep) at St Mary Magdalene church, Paddington, where the composer and his wife both performed. Complementing Gunning's programme of French music, Nicholas Kaye presents readings related to the composers.



## ORGAN COMPETITIONS



▲ L'Oratoire du Louvre church, Paris, co-hosts 'The Youthful Organ' competition

TWO COMPETITIONS FOR YOUNG ORGANISTS are scheduled to take place in October.

The second edition of the Académie André Marchal's competition '**The Youthful Organ**' will be held in the Paris area on 19-21 October.

The competition has two categories: Benjamins (for those born after 31 October 2006), hosted by the church of Notre-Dame-du-Rosaire, Saint-Maur; and Juniors (for those born between 31 October 2002 and 31 October 2006), held at the Protestant church of l'Oratoire du Louvre, Paris. The repertoire will evoke the 150th anniversary of the births of Tournemire and Vierne, and the 40th anniversary of the death of André Marchal.

The jury comprises Véronique Le Guen (president), Philippe Brandeis, David Cassan, Françoise Dorner, and Haru Espinasse-Yamagami.

All the candidates will receive a diploma of participation in the competition, and prizes of books, CDs and DVDs, participation in a recording of a CD, and recitals will be awarded to the winners in the three categories.

Further details are at [academieandremarchal.org](http://academieandremarchal.org); contact [academie.andre.marchal@gmail.com](mailto:academie.andre.marchal@gmail.com). **Application deadline: 15 Sep 2020.**

Following hot on its heels is the postponed **Northern Ireland International Organ Competition**, which now takes place on 23-24 October in Armagh, alongside a 'taster' version of the Charles Wood Summer School. Because of the competition's postponement, only the Senior section will take place (23 October) as well as a masterclass by the jury chair Sophie-Véronique Cauchefeur-Choplin (24 October). The jury also includes Simon Harden and David Hill.

With the enforced postponement, the date of eligibility has been extended: organists who will not yet be 22 by 24 October are allowed to apply. Full details are at [niioc.com](http://niioc.com).

*All events are subject to cancellation in the event of further outbreaks of Covid-19, and readers are strongly advised to check websites before proceeding.*

### FORTHCOMING EVENTS



#### Virtual Choral Leaders' Festival

4-6 Sep

**Abcd's** first ever Virtual Choral Leaders' Festival. A series of online webinars and workshops for everyone leading

singing. Sessions will include topics that are directly connected to the current situation and intended to give conductors help and advice, but also topics addressing training and support for conductors at any time.

#### Autumn webinars

12 and 26 Sep, 10 and 24 Oct, 7 and 21 Nov, and 5 Dec

Every fortnight, **abcd** are hosting forum discussions and lectures led by their

team of tutors and special guests on a wide range of choral topics covering stylistic interpretation, music education and vocal health, among many others. All webinars will take place on Saturdays from 11am to 12:30pm and will be hosted on Zoom. Advance booking for webinars is required.

*All abcd events can be found at [abcd.org.uk/events/abcd-events](http://abcd.org.uk/events/abcd-events), including online booking where applicable.*

**Please email items for News and Letters to the Editor for publication in future issues to [maggie.hamilton@markallengroup.com](mailto:maggie.hamilton@markallengroup.com), or post to The Editor, Choir & Organ, Mark Allen Group, St Jude's Church, Dulwich Road, London SE24 0PB, UK.**



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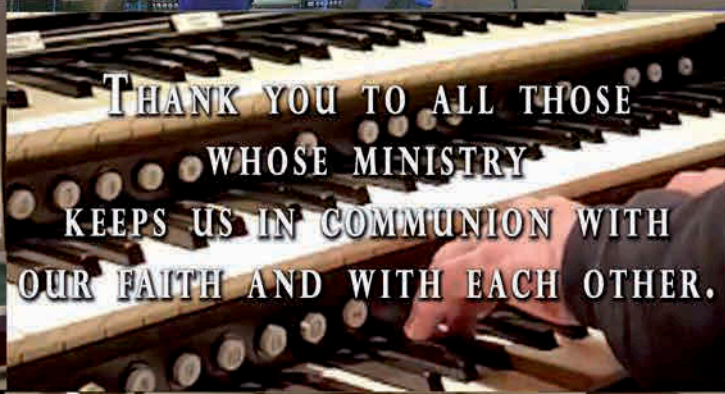
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# Jane Parker-Smith

## 1950 – 2020

Jane Parker-Smith was a unique figure in the organ world. As individual as she was talented, her unexpected death on 24 June saw a star of much needed brilliance, colour and temperament disappear beyond the horizon. Few organists in our times have achieved such fame and reputation, or drawn so many from the outside, broader fields of musical appreciation into the all too often self-isolating world of organ music. With her distinctive brand of glittering glamour, and armed with her fabled prodigious technique, she brought her passionate nature to the music of the instrument that had stolen her heart by chance while a student at the Royal College of Music.

Of her teachers, Parker-Smith's musical idol was always Nicolas Kynaston, and she remained unfailingly grateful to him throughout her career. Although his influence was clearly evident in earlier years, her strong personality soon asserted its individuality. She concentrated on the

else could match: she let rip on the organ and played with all the guts she was known for, at times taking reckless risks, throwing everything she had at the music and grappling with the instrument in a manner the more conservative often thought was simply outrageous. But, equally, her sensitive nature allowed her to interpret with great artistry and expression works of deep feeling. It was all a true reflection of her nature: away from the organ, she lived life to the full – a *bonne vivante* who revelled in as much life, fun and spirit as was possible. Socially she was frequently seen with a progression of drinks and flaming cigarettes in hand (sometimes each hand!), her unshockable humour and riotous laugh enlivening many an occasion or after-concert gathering. But in private she could be quiet, reflective and very kind.

Undoubtedly Parker-Smith was something of a controversial figure: despite occasional waves of self-doubt, she sometimes revelled in that controversy,

## Her electrifying energy, virtuosity and power left audiences feeling as though they'd been plugged into the National Grid

big, emotionally charged music she both excelled in and felt comfortable with, wisely avoiding areas of repertoire in which she felt she couldn't offer as much as others. On top form she was able to set vibrating a concert hall, cathedral or church with such electrifying energy, virtuosity and power that she left audiences feeling as though they'd been plugged into the National Grid and been shaken to the core. Her approach to playing the instrument was fearless, as was the high-octane fuel which engulfed her in the thrill of speed as she threw herself into the most demanding virtuoso works. Of diminutive stature, she nonetheless had a powerful stage presence and sultry allure that no one

and at other times was deeply hurt by it. A musician whose playing reflected an often complex, even contradictory, nature, she was without question a one-off: a much needed antidote to any traditional expectation of a classical organist. While remarkably articulate about musical matters, she was not concerned with any formulaic academic approach: music as an expression of Life mattered more than the textbook, and her passion was for the beauty and power of music and the organ, not for observing rules.

Throwing herself into promoting the organ and its music worldwide, to try and put it on a par with other instruments, she fired its profile far into the imagination



▲ Jane Parker-Smith 'fired the organ's profile far into the imagination of the majority and the uninitiated'

of the majority and the uninitiated. She brought theatre and a sense of presentation to organ recitals, and her name became that rare thing for organists – a crowd-magnet.

Hers was the first organ recital I ever attended (in March 1979) and she remained a huge inspiration to me: I doubt I would ever have loved the organ so without her example and I am very grateful. Many of us who attended her numerous Royal Festival Hall recitals in particular will remember remarkable performances, some of which were among the most astonishingly brilliant I've ever heard.

The organ world has lost one of its icons. May she go forward in peace ... and I hope the Heavens are ready for her: she will surely shake them up mercilessly, confront many a composer over this or that detail she had her own ideas about, and will make the skies vibrate with beautiful music as she did earthly planes. ■

D'Arcy Trinkwon

(To read Jane Parker-Smith in interview with Dr William McVicker in the January/February 2003 issue of *Choir & Organ*, visit [bit.ly/3gRIud8](http://bit.ly/3gRIud8).)







# Seeing the light

A new organ edition and recording of a Mass by Pierre Villette is set to bring the work to public attention 50 years after it was completed, writes **Stephen Pritchard**

Choirs worldwide enjoy singing the perfect miniature that is Pierre Villette's *Hymne à la Vierge*, initially made popular in the UK, along with his other choral works, by Donald Hunt and the Choir of Worcester Cathedral in the 1970s. Now, singers who revel in the delicious cluster chords and tasty chromaticism that mark out Villette's particular style can look forward to tackling an altogether larger-scale piece – his *Messe 'Da Pacem'*. Dormant for 50 years, it has been given startling new life by the organist and choral director Rupert Gough.

Pierre Villette (1926-98) could be said to occupy a unique place in French music, both reaching back to Debussy and Fauré but also forward with Poulenc and Messiaen. Like his teacher Duruflé, his choral soundscape is deeply imbued with Gregorian chant (as a boy he sang at Rouen Cathedral), yet he infuses it with ambitious harmonic colours that lend it a distinctively warm sensuality.

It was that intense palette that attracted Gough first to consider making an organ reduction of Villette's large-scale *Messe en Français*, a piece given its premiere by Hunt at the Three Choirs Festival in 1981. That proved too complicated to manage, but United Music Publishing told Gough there was a smaller orchestral piece in existence, the neglected *Messe 'Da Pacem'*. 'They sent me the score,' relates Gough, 'and immediately I could see it had huge potential for organ.'

Laid out in traditional Mass form, the piece is dated 1970, but, as Gough discovered when examining a sketchy piano reduction made by Villette, the Kyrie and Agnus Dei actually date from 1951. It would appear that Villette put those aside, and years later, when asked to provide a large-scale piece, reworked them, adding a Gloria, Sanctus and Benedictus on a grander scale.

Villette had become director of the Darius Milhaud Conservatoire at Aix-en-Provence in 1967, and the *Messe 'Da Pacem'* received what seems to have been its only performance at the church of La Madeleine in Aix when conservatoire forces staged it in 1970, conducted by Clement Zaffini, with Villette playing one of two organ parts.

Gough, who is director of choral music and college organist at Royal Holloway, University of London, and organist and director of music at Great St Bartholomew, London, described making the organ reduction as satisfyingly complicated. 'Sometimes things just present themselves, but it is much harder when there is lots of texture in the orchestral writing, particularly those sections that don't have a strong bass but several layers of harmony. There are so many notes that require rather more fingers than you can find. I took the organ part of the Duruflé Requiem as a model, which, for instance, sometimes places the melody in the pedals. What you might call extended techniques have to be employed to play this, as I



COURTESY VILLETTE FAMILY ESTATE

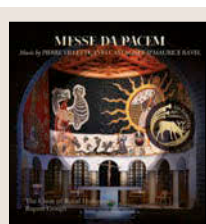
◀ The French composer Pierre Villette, whose *Messe 'Da Pacem'* has been brought into the light after decades of obscurity

▶ Rupert Gough and the Choir of Royal Holloway make the premiere recording of the *Messe 'Da Pacem'* in the church of Notre-Dame d'Auteuil, Paris

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▲ The 'Gratias agimus tibi' section of the Gloria in its original orchestration (l) and in the arrangement for organ (r)



Villette's *Messe 'Da Pacem'* will be released in September on the Ad Fontes label [AF004], with Sarah Fox (soprano), the Choir of Royal Holloway, Andrew Dewar and Liam Condon (organ) and conducted by Rupert Gough.

◀ wanted to include as much of Villette's rich harmony as I could, but even then, when there are so many notes in a chord, you have to make careful judgements about what you can afford to leave out.'

His organ score is impressively flamboyant, not least because Gough saw it as an opportunity to introduce the colours of the French solo organ repertoire into an accompanying role. He found his admiration for Villette grew as he worked on the score, noting how most of the drama is in the mellifluous choral writing: 'The way the Kyrie unfolds in a Duruflé style just feels so right. And I admire how he gets away with some of the jazz harmonies he incorporates. Other composers try, and it just sounds cheap, but Villette knows when to use them with taste. Apparently, he loved listening to jazz when he was in Paris in the 1940s and claimed to have been influenced by the sound of the Glenn Miller Orchestra.'

If that makes you fear that the Mass lacks depth, you would be mistaken. There are many profound moments in this richly rewarding music – the sumptuous opening Kyrie; the beautifully reflective 'Miserere' in the Gloria; an emphatic 'Cum sancto' fugue that leads to a blazingly ecstatic D major 'Amen', and some sinuously lyrical writing for solo

soprano, particularly in the Benedictus. You can judge for yourself in September when Gough and his Royal Holloway choir release a recording of the Mass, included on a CD of works by Villette, Ravel and Castagnet.

The choir travelled to Paris to make the recording at the church of Notre-Dame d'Auteuil, which Gough admits he chose because of its magnificent, recently restored Cavaillé-Coll organ, which he felt would be perfect for the piece. He directed the choir in the Mass, with Andrew Dewar in the loft. Dewar is a former pupil of Gough's at Wells Cathedral School and is now organist at the American Cathedral in Paris and a professor of organ at the Royal College of Music. 'When Andrew said it was quite tricky, I knew it probably *was* quite tricky; but he makes it sound effortless. He records very much in the French style – we shared a good three-course meal and a bottle of wine beforehand.'

The CD was made at the height of 2019's summer heatwave. 'It was a very compressed timetable, so we ended up working into the early hours of the morning, both to allow the church to have its regular services and to avoid road noise and the rumblings of the Metro underneath. Yet even at night it was 29C inside the church, so everyone was sweating buckets.'



Despite this, Gough says, his young singers enjoyed the experience: 'They were really fired up by all the music on the recording. The Mass is tricky: resonant jazz chords need careful tuning, there are several top Bs for the sopranos, and there is the handling of a distant "celestial" semi-chorus in the Sanctus, but they coped with it all magnificently.'

For the semi-chorus, Gough followed an option suggested by the composer: rather than having them separated from the choir, way down the nave, he pre-recorded them and played back their contribution through speakers placed high up in the vaults.

The soprano Sarah Fox, a Royal Holloway alumna, sings the solos on the recording. Gough is unstinting in his praise for the quality of her voice and her professionalism in that searing heat. 'The choir were in awe of her. Her interpretation of the Benedictus is glorious. It's an almost outrageously lovely solo line and Villette keeps finding more wonderful chords in the accompaniment. It's almost as though he didn't want it to end.'

There are three other Villette items on the disc: his only work for solo organ, *Elévation* op.22, played by Gough; *Salutation angélique*, a small piece for soprano solo and organ, sung by Fox, accompanied by Gough; and the ever-popular *Hymne à la Vierge*. 'It is interesting that those three pieces were all written around the same time, when for health reasons he was living in the Alps, and at a time when he met his future wife Josette, to whom *Hymne à la Vierge* is dedicated,' explains Gough.

Having published his organ reduction and vocal score, UMP has now asked Gough to produce a properly edited orchestral score. 'I was planning to perform the full score version at St John's Smith Square in January 2021, but Covid-19 has naturally caused that to be cancelled.' As with choirs everywhere, the pandemic has dealt a body blow to Royal Holloway. 'We had to postpone four recording projects, including one on the music of George Arthur, just when the choir was on a roll. It's frustrating.' But for now Gough is using the lockdown to perfect his orchestral score, while reflecting on the extraordinary fact that Villette is barely known in France. 'In the UK and the US, his music is known and sung – for instance, Stephen Layton has recorded his motets with the Holst Singers. Now, I really hope his *Messe 'Da Pacem'* will be picked up by choirs everywhere. It makes a perfect companion piece to the Duruflé Requiem.' ■

*Stephen Pritchard writes on music for the Observer and the classical music website Bachtrack. He trained at Portsmouth Cathedral and sings with the English Chamber Choir.*



▲ Andrew Dewar at the console of Notre-Dame d'Auteuil

▼ Royal Holloway Choir director Rupert Gough: 'I could see the Mass's accompaniment had huge potential for the organ'





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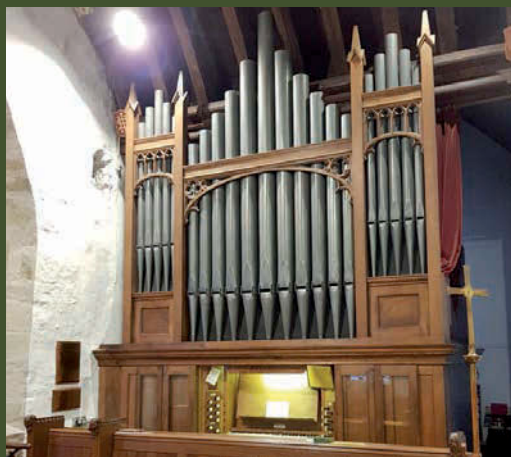
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▲ The 1739 Michael Engler organ in Krzeszów

# The master of Silesia

In the latest part of his series surveying the most important historic organs in Poland, **Krzysztof Urbaniak** investigates the legacy of Michael Engler. PHOTOS BY KRZYSZTOF URBANIAK

Most visitors who travel to the picturesque Polish region of Dolny Śląsk (since 1945 Lower Silesia, previously Niederschlesien) will be impressed by the landscapes, the numerous churches, the castles and the newly rejuvenated vineyards. The complex history of the region, encompassing Habsburg, Prussian and Polish influences, has for the organ connoisseur an interesting consequence. Due to the bi-confessional structure of Silesia's community, almost every village has at least two churches: one Lutheran and one Catholic. This density of

places of worship is paralleled by a similar density of historic organs. When, in 1917, preparations were made for the confiscation of tin organ pipes for war purposes, it transpired that, with its c.2,150 organs, Śląsk had the highest number of instruments of all the Prussian provinces. Most of these organs, representing every period of historic organ building, have been preserved and are the subject of both research and an intensive musical life. Organisations such as the Verein zur Erforschung und Erhaltung schlesischer Orgeln ([veeso.de](http://veeso.de)) have greatly contributed to the restoration of many of these instruments.

A devoted player of Max Reger's œuvre will find hundreds of unchanged instruments by Sauer, Walcker, Schlag & Söhne and other renowned builders of the late 19th and early 20th centuries. An admirer of Mendelssohn, Liszt and Ritter will be able to dive into the world of builders such as Hartig, Buckow or the Müller family. Anyone who loves the music of Bach and the baroque era will be amazed by the sumptuous creations of the families Casparini, Engler, Scheffler and Meinert.

Silesia seems to be a particularly fascinating crossing point: a place where



## Michael Engler the Younger: specifications of three-manual organs

BRZEG / BRIEG,  
ST NIKOLAI (1730)KRZESZÓW / GRÜSSAU,  
KLOSTERKIRCHE (1739)OLOMOUC / OLMÜTZ,  
ST MAURITIUS (1745)WROCLAW / BRESLAU,  
ST ELISABETH (1761)**HAUPTWERK**

Violon-Baß	16 (Baß)
Bordun Flaut	16
Quintatön	16
Salizet	16
Prinzipal	8
Gemshorn	8
Flaut major	8
Salicet	8
Oktave	4
Flaut minor	4
Quinte	3
Superoktave	2
Sesquialtera	2fach
Mixtur	6fach
Cimbal	2fach
Trompete	8

**RÜCKPOSITIV**

Prinzipal	8
Flaut allemand	8
Quintatön	8
Flaut lieblich	8
Oktave	4
Quinte	3
Superoktave	2
Sedezima	1
Mixtur	3fach
Oboe	8

**OBERWERK**

Prinzipal	8
Rohrflaut	8
Unda maris	8
Prinzipal	4
Spitz-Flaut	4
Nachthorn	4
Quinte	3
Oktave	2
Quinte	1 1/2
Sedezima	1
Mixtur	4fach
Vox humana	8

**PEDAL**

Majorbaß	32
Prinzipal	16
Subbaß	16
Quintatönbaß	16
Salicetbaß	16
Offener Baß	16
Oktavenbaß *	8
Flaut-Baß *	8
Gemshornquint	6
Superoktavbaß *	4
Mixtur	6fach
Posaunenbaß	32
Posaunenbaß	16
Trompetbaß	8

2 manual couplers  
1 pedal coupler  
Tremulant OW  
2 "würckliche Heerpauken"  
transposing device RP  
\* - Kammerbäße

**HAUPTWERK**

Bordunflöte	16
Quintadena	16
Viola di Gamba	16
Principal	8
Gemshorn	8
Flaut major	8
Salicet	8
Unda maris	8
Oktave	4
Nachthorn	4
Gemshornquinte	3
Superoktave	2
Mixtur	6fach 2
Cimbal	2fach

**RÜCKPOSITIV**

Principal	8
Fl. allemand	8
Quintadena	8
Flaut amabile	8
Oktave	4
Quinta	3
Superoktave	2
Sedecima	1
Mixtur	3fach 1
Hautbois	8

**OBERWERK**

Principal	8
Rohr-Flaut	8
Traveur	8
Vox humana	8
Oktave	4
Flaut minor	4
Quinta	3
Superoktave	2
Quinta	1 1/2
Sedecima	1
Mixtur	4fach 1 1/2
Trompet	8

**PEDAL**

Majorbaß	32
Principal	16
Subbaß *	16
Quintaden *	16
Salicet *	16
Violonbaß	16
Oktavenbaß *	8
Flaut	8
Gemshornquint	6
Superoktave	4
Mixtur	6fach 3
Posaunenbaß	32
Posaunenbaß	16
Trompet	8

2 manual couplers  
transposing device RP  
\* - Kammerbäße

**HAUPTWERK**

Principal	16
Bordunflaut	16
Principal	8
Flaut major	8
Gemshorn	8
Gamba	8
Salcional	8
Octava	4
Nachthorn	4
Quinta	3
Mixtura	6fach 2
Cimbal	2fach 1
Trompet	8

**IN DER BRUST**

Principal	8
Rohrflaut	8
Flaut alemand	8
Quintadena	8
Oktave	4
Quinta	3
Superoktave	2
Mixtura	4fach 1 1/2
Vox humana	8

**OBERWERK**

Principal	8
Flaut amabile	8
Unda maris	8
Oktave	4
Flaut minor	4
Trinuna	4
Gemsquint	3
Superoktave	2
Mixtura 4fach	1 1/2

**PEDAL**

Majorbaß	32
Principal	16
Offener Baß	16
Subbaß *	16
Quintadena *	16
Octava *	8
Gemsquint	6
Mixtura	6fach 4
Posaune	16
Trompete	8

2 manual couplers  
transposing device UW  
9 Sperrventile  
Calcanten-Glöcklein  
\* - Kammerbäße

**HAUPTWERK**

Violon	16 (Baß)
Bordunflöte	16
Quintatön	16
Salicet	16
Prinzipal	8
Gemshorn	8
Große Flöte	8
Salicet	8
Vox humana	8
Oktave	4
Nachthorn	4
Quinte	3
Superoktave	2
Mixtur	6fach
Zimbel	3fach
Trompete	8 (ab dis1)

**RÜCKPOSITIV**

Prinzipal	8
Deutsche Flöte	8
Quintatön	8
Liebliche Flöte	8
Oktave	4
Quinte	3
Superoktave	2
Mixtur	4fach
Zimbel	2fach
Oboe	8

**OBERWERK**

Prinzipal	8
Rohrflöte	8
Querflöte	8
Unda maris	8
Oktave	4
Spitzflöte	4
Kleine Flöte	4
Quinte	3
Superoktave	2
Quinta	1 1/2
Sedezima	1
Sesquialtera	2fach
Mixtur	4fach
Chalumeau	8 (ab g)

**PEDAL**

Majorbaß	32
Prinzipal	16
Subbaß	16
Quintatön	16
Salicet	16
Violonbaß	16
Oktave	8
Flöte	8
Gemshorn-Quinte	6
Superoktave	4
Mixtur	5fach
Posaune	32
Posaune	16
Trompete	8

2 manual couplers  
Tremulant  
Pauken  
Glockenspiel  
Kammerton tuning

◀ different influences meet, creating a unique set of tonal aesthetics. The local traditions of the early 17th century – represented among others by members of the direct circle around the Compenius family – are combined here with the Italian-influenced concepts of Eugenio Casparini and the northern ideas of Schnitger's pupil Johann Michael Röder, resulting in the creations of three generations of the Engler family, perhaps the most ingenious of them all.

In the writings of the 19th century, Michael Engler the Younger (1688-1760) – the most important member of the family – was already mentioned in the same breath as Silbermann, Hildebrandt, Casparini, Wagner and Gabler as 'the one who created for

the very narrow nave of the exceptionally tall gothic church. He placed his organ very high, allowing his design to be influenced by the instrument built in 1725 by Johann Michael Röder (c.1680-1748) for the Maria Magdalena church in Wrocław. The façade in Brzeg was designed to follow a concave line, allowing maximum use of the available space. The 52 stops were distributed between Hauptwerk, Oberwerk, Rückpositiv and Pedal, creating a well-balanced instrument with a very rich tonal palette. The Hauptwerk, with its four 16ft and five 8ft stops, had a rich fundamental tone, with three mixtures, three string stops at 16ft and 8ft pitch, as well as numerous flutes. The Oberwerk had its 8ft and 4ft standing in the façade, and

was based on two 32ft stops and also included four stops that could be transposed from Chorton to Kammerton. Although the Engler organ in Brzeg was dismantled and taken into safe keeping around 1944, it did not survive the second world war. Some carvings from the organ case and a few pipes are still in existence.

Engler's second big instrument – and one of two which survive to the present day – was built in 1739 for the monumental Cistercian monastery church of Krzeszów (Grüßau until 1945). Interestingly, the monastery has two churches: a smaller one with a beautifully restored one-manual organ from c.1695, and the main basilica with the famous Engler organ. The general layout of the organ, and its specification, are very similar to Brzeg but the original Oberwerk was replaced with a Brustwerk-like division occupying the central part of the unusually wide façade, located just above the console. The visitor is almost overwhelmed by the richness of the carvings and the sumptuous design of the organ's interior, with its own spiral staircases and glass windows: there was apparently no shortage of financial resources and only the best would do. The 2008 restoration, undertaken by Jehmlich Orgelbau (Dresden), has returned the organ to its original state. The Oberwerk, with its 12 stops, once again stands behind the central pipe-flat and towers of the façade, its tonal scheme almost identical to that formerly at Brieg. The great surprise of this Oberwerk is the Casparini- ▶

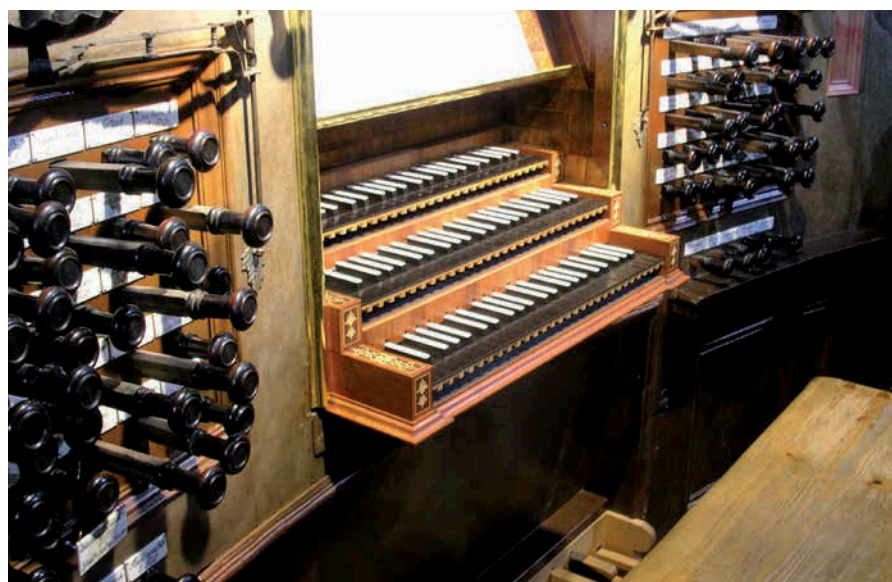
## In the writings of the 19th century, Michael Engler the Younger was already mentioned in the same breath as Silbermann, Hildebrandt, Casparini, Wagner and Gabler

himself an eternal monument' through his instruments. He was apparently educated in the workshop of his father, Michael Engler the Elder, in Wrocław (Breslau until 1945) and probably had additional contact with Eugenio and Adam Horatio Casparini. After Engler junior had become a fully trained and independent organ builder, he built a number of one- and two-manual instruments in and around Wrocław. The high quality of the materials used, and the general durability of his creations, ensured his reputation as a respected and sought-after master. His organs quickly developed from conservative keyboard compasses of CDEFGA-c3, via CDE-c3, to the more progressive CD-c3. Meanwhile, Engler's specifications included fully developed principal choruses, numerous string stops, tierce mixtures and – albeit less numerous – reeds. He also experimented with visual designs, employing the best sculptors and carpenters in order to create spectacular, almost theatrical, richly polychrome façades, often with movable figures.

The first of Engler's four monumental organs was built for the then-Lutheran St Nicolai Church in Brzeg (Brieg until 1945) and finished in 1730. Engler had to cope with

was equipped with a Casparini-influenced Unda maris 8ft. The Rückpositiv was divided into two separate cases (C and C sharp sides) built in to the balustrade. Thanks to a special device, the Rückpositiv could also be transposed down one whole tone: from 'Chorton' (a1 = c.465 Hz) to 'Kammerton' (a1 = c.415 Hz), allowing performance with other instruments. The impressive pedal division

▼ The console in Krzeszów







▲ Engler engaged the best sculptors and carpenters to create exceptionally rich façades

◀ influenced *Vox humana*: a completely developed *Voce umana*, located in the façade together with the Principal 8ft. Its effect, especially when combined with the Principal and the Pedal Salicet 16ft, is exceptional. The Oberwerk's mixture contains a tierce rank. The Hauptwerk, meanwhile, has a massive, full-bodied plenum with tierce mixture and cymbale. In addition, it has many refined flutes, a 16ft Viola di Gamba, 8ft Salicet and an Unda maris 8ft – an open, wooden flute. The Rückpositiv's composition is identical to Brzeg and it likewise can be transposed to Kammerton. For this reason, every stop in the division has additional pipes for B and B flat in the bass. The Flaut allemande

8ft is a conical flute, the Flaut amabile a wooden gedact. The unique wind-chest of the Rückpositiv copies the construction employed by Eugenio Casparini in the Oberwerk of his famous 'Sonnenorgel' in Görlitz. The note channels are horizontal, and are separated for every pipe. The stops are arranged in steps, with those at the front in the lowest position and the mixture significantly higher. The pedal is divided between three wind-chests: two in the large pedal towers and a separate chest for the 16ft Violon and the 32ft, 16ft and 8ft reeds. Because of the enormous width of the organ, it is difficult to judge registrations at the console, and one is obliged to make the effort to go downstairs and listen from

the nave. If one were to describe the sound of this organ, special mention would be made of the delicate, chamber music-like character of the flutes and strings, and the fundamental, characteristic sound of the plenum with its noble principals.

Engler's third three-manual organ was built for Olomouc (Czech Republic, until 1945 known as Olmütz), completed in 1745. The overall design was smaller than in Brzeg and Krzeszów with the divided Rückpositiv migrating into the main cases as a kind of Unterwerk, located on each side of the console. The organ in Olomouc has retained most of its original pipework, but was significantly enlarged between 1959 and 1971 by the Rieger-Kloss company; it now totals 135 stops. The additions have fortunately been installed around the original Engler organ so that the historic instrument retains its chests, pipework and large portions of its action.

Michael Engler's last creation was his monumental organ for St Elisabeth's Church in Wrocław, built between 1750 and 1761 and finished after Engler's death by his pupils. This organ surpassed Olomouc in many ways. It was to have a grander façade, to be tuned entirely in Kammerton and to have more stops than any other organ made by the master's workshop. After changes in the 19th century (Schlag & Söhne) and in the 20th century (Sauer/Walcker) the organ was destroyed in a tragic fire in 1976. At present, it is being faithfully reconstructed by a consortium consisting of Orgelbau Klais, Manufacture d'Orgues Dominique Thomas and Zych Zakłady Organowe. This unique project, with a price tag of around €5m, will be completed in the autumn of 2021.

Following the completion of the restoration/reconstruction projects in Krzeszów and Wrocław, the focus will fall on Olomouc and on Engler's smaller creations in Silesia and in central Poland. It is to be hoped that these projects raise Engler's stock in the international organ culture, placing him once again in the context he surely deserves. ■

*Dr Krzysztof Urbaniak is professor of organ and head of the Institute of Harpsichord, Organ, Sacred Music and Early Instruments at the Baciewicz Academy of Music in Łódź, as well as a multi-award-winning organist. From 2013-16 he was an organ expert for the Polish Ministry of Culture.*



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ALLAN TARANTO ARS MAGNA STUDIO

▲ Enriching the repertoire through co-creative collaboration: the Lorelei Ensemble

# Sirens in song

The nine members of the Lorelei Ensemble aim to do more than simply entertain with their music – their goal is to bring about transformation, as they explain to **Clare Stevens**

**I**t is an indication of these strange times that watching and listening to a YouTube video in which nine women are standing in a semicircle in the same room and singing together, rather than recording their individual lines for an editor to stitch together, feels like a magical experience. Researching this article back in June, it was hard to tell when choirs would be able to record together again, let alone perform for audiences. Wonders have been achieved over the past few months by virtual ensembles, but there is nothing quite like the real thing – even when the real thing is on YouTube.

The nine women who gave me that experience were members of the Boston-based Lorelei Ensemble, and their captivating performance was 'Little Rose,' an extract from Shawn Kirchner's *Rose/Riddle/Rainbow*, a three-movement suite for nine solo SSA voices which the composer describes as 'a creative, choral

response to contemporary social issues.' Inspired by the powerful heritage of the African American spiritual, each movement's original music and text includes fragments of a companion spiritual.

Lorelei commissioned the suite for a 2017 concert on the theme of 'Witness'. Kirchner's aim was to pay homage to the essential qualities of spirituals while creating new music and text that reflected 'such current realities as the Syrian civil war/refugee crisis, the Black Lives Matter movement, and the threat of tyranny at home and abroad'. By the summer of 2020 the piece had gained even greater resonance in the wake of George Floyd's murder and its aftermath.

Lorelei and its artistic director/conductor Beth Willer are no strangers to performing music that has a powerful political impact. 'As a listener, I am most moved by a performance that has a message – be that social, political, personal, religious, philosophical



– that is lifted up by impeccable artistry,’ she says. ‘Ideally, one would never really stand “in front” of the other. When the two are masterfully married – powerful message embedded in powerful music, or intimate message within intimate music – we hear both the message and the music more clearly. In my programming there is always narrative, and sometimes a message is explicit, but other times the audience has work to do, to assign meaning to the music and the words based on their own experience.’

‘Sometimes the musical experience alone, free of text, is enough to evoke something personal in the listener to turn them inward; or alternatively to lose themselves in something that is outside themselves. In any case, I’d say my goal is to bring about change through music, to consider our work a catalyst for transformation – whether that be in greater society, or an individual heart and mind.’

Willer is currently director of choral studies and ensembles at Johns Hopkins Peabody Institute; her previous academic appointments include positions at Bucknell University, Harvard University and Boston Conservatory, and she has been guest conductor for ensembles such as Seraphic Fire, the Bang on a Can All-Stars and Roomful of Teeth. She founded the Lorelei Ensemble in 2007, with a mission to ‘advance and elevate women’s voices, and to enrich the repertoire through forward-thinking and co-creative collaboration.’ The result has been more than 60 world, US and regional premieres.

Lorelei’s roster of singers is quite consistent, but there is also a healthy amount of fluidity from project to project, that provides flexibility in terms of voice

type and expertise, Willer explains. ‘When we are commissioning, I do ask composers to consider the individuals contracted for that particular project. Sometimes we go so far as to provide a vocal profile for each voice – not just range, but recordings of vocalises and repertoire in free and straight tone, demonstrating the broad palette of vocal colour and style they bring to the table.’

‘What makes Lorelei remarkable, in my opinion, is the time we spend cultivating an ensemble sound that doesn’t mute the vocal character of each individual. Some repertoires showcase this diversity of vocal personality more explicitly; other repertoires demand a more unified colour, but it is certainly a priority of ours to preserve individual vocal quality in the midst of a unified ensemble sound.’

Of the composers Lorelei has worked with, most have been American, says Willer: ‘That’s not a deliberate choice so much as a practicality. Over the years, we have worked with a number of folks from different ethnicities and backgrounds, women and men.’

‘My priority is always to work with the person whose artistic work is most appealing and most courageous, someone who is willing to write for us in a way that they perhaps haven’t written in the past. Often this means collaborating with a person with whom I’ve developed a certain amount of personal connection and trust. So many of our collaborations have arisen through a natural evolution of an artistic relationship.’

‘This said, our effort to commission and work with a diverse group of artists has become more intentional in recent years – and I believe it must be. If we only work >

▼ ‘No strangers to performing music that has a political impact’: the Lorelei Ensemble in concert



JOE COBRINGTON



◀ with those that find their way into our field of vision by chance, then we are less likely to explore musical language and cultural perspective that will lead us down a transformative path. Further, as educators of, and artistic role models for, young people, we need to project inclusivity and diversity.'

Willer admits that composers are often surprised to be asked to write for a female voice professional consort, 'especially when I ask them to write specifically for sopranos, mezzos, and contraltos – as opposed to children's voices. In most cases, knowing the artistry of the group, folks are thrilled to do the work and figure it out.'

This summer saw the release of Lorelei's recording of a new, enlarged version of David Lang's *love fail*, a meditation on the timelessness of love that weaves details from the medieval retellings of the story of Tristan and Isolde with more modern stories. It was originally written for vocal quartet with percussion (played by the singers). Lang offered to make the new version after hearing some of his music on an earlier recording by the ensemble: 'I wanted to thank them for their musicality, their passion and their commitment.'

'We have an affinity for David's music, which we have been performing since our early years together,' says Willer. 'This piece is particularly striking – David's

### 'As educators of, and artistic role models for, young people, we need to project inclusivity and diversity'

'There is often a tendency for composers to lean into the high sopranos and the low contraltos in the extremes of their range. And yes, this is part of what we are doing that is exceptional – exploring extreme ranges of the female voice. But it's also in many senses an "equal voice" ensemble – our ranges overlap significantly. When someone finds a way to write for the individuals and really allow everyone to get into and out of the staff, to give individual voices or small ensembles moments to step out of the texture and dominate, that is when the sound of Lorelei is most striking. The clarity of the texture comes not from keeping each voice "in its place", but rather from writing in a way that celebrates individual voices – as in a string quartet.'

brilliant use of silence and direct delivery of text, the intimacy and immediacy of Lydia Davis's poetry, the ancient tale of accidental and all-encompassing love – it draws you in, and it is gripping.'

A virtual launch party in June marked the release of *love fail*. Supporters were invited to make themselves a celebratory 'The Wood and the Vine' cocktail (recipe provided by Lang's daughter Theodora) and join in a Zoom chat – with the proceeds from CD sales on the night going to the NAACP Legal Defense and Educational Fund, America's premier legal organisation fighting for racial justice.

In common with performing groups around the world, Lorelei has faced the cancellation of most of this year's



ALLAN TARANTO, ARS MAGNA STUDIO

live performances and has also been forced by both the global pandemic and the #BlackLivesMatter campaign to reconsider its mission and its mode of operating.

In June 2019 the ensemble's board had approved a five-year strategic plan, supporting Lorelei's mission to create and champion bold artistic work that points to a new normal for women in music. But as concert venues started closing and festivals began to be cancelled in March 2020, a rethink was necessary.

'The board checked in with our Lorelei artists and then turned to a difficult but necessary conversation about our new reality,' says Willer. 'In this physically distanced world, how do we continue to collaborate and create as a vocal ensemble? The answer became increasingly clear: this is a moment that demands innovation, courage, and NEW ART. As an ensemble committed to creating new music and transforming the vocal art, this is our moment to lead.'

With that in mind, Lorelei has continued to engage with young artists across the USA through a virtual education programme, inspiring them to look ahead to a time when they will once again sing together. A series of emails on the theme of 'Impermanence' explores the current crisis and its impact on the arts community, through statements from artists, educators and others. And the ensemble has committed itself to initiating new artistic projects for a new era, working with composers, choreographers, visual artists and engineers from across the globe, appealing directly to financial donors to support this work.

Another significant item in Lorelei's 2020-21 season was co-commissioned by the Nashville Symphony,

Chicago Symphony, San Francisco Symphony, Boston Symphony, and National Symphony orchestras.

Julia Wolfe's *Her Story* is the latest in a series by the composer highlighting monumental and turbulent moments in American history and culture. It commemorates the centenary of the 1920 ratification of the 19th Amendment, granting women in the US the right to vote. 'I have been absolutely captivated by the work of Julia Wolfe since conducting her Pulitzer-prize winning work, *Anthracite Fields*, in 2017,' says Willer. 'Her ability to uncover and curate the diverse voices surrounding both common and spectacular events in the history of our great nation makes her an ideal creator and collaborator for this project. I envisage this piece as a celebration of the power and influence of American women in achieving equality and justice for all American citizens. It is sure to make a lasting impact, both artistically and culturally.' ■

*Premieres of Her Story, with the respective orchestras, were scheduled for Nashville (10, 11, 12 September – now postponed), Boston (5, 6, 7 November), San Francisco (12, 14 November – also postponed), Chicago (26, 27 February 2021), and Washington DC (4, 5, 6 March 2021). Updates on the premieres, as well as all the Lorelei Ensemble's activities, can be found on their website and social media channels. LoreleiEnsemble.com*

*Clare Stevens works as a writer, editor and publicist in the Welsh Marches, where she sings with Hereford Choral Society.*





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'Delicate, chamber music-like character of the flutes and strings, and the ... characteristic sound of the plenum with its noble principals.' So writes Krzysztof Urbaniak of the organ Michael Engler the Younger built for the Cistercian monastery Basilica of Krzeszów, Poland (1739, restored by Jehmlich Orgelbau in 2008) (see feature, p.19).

Readers now have a chance to hear this instrument on an SACD, released in 2011, of music by J.S. Bach and his contemporaries, performed by Polish organist Julian Gembalski. Courtesy of the record label Musicon, we have 2 copies of the CD to give away; quote code 'ENGLER'.

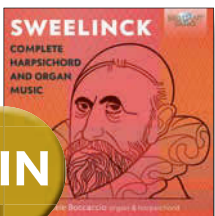
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★★★★★

'An outstanding release' (see review, p.70)



**WIN**

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Signum SIGCD 630

'A work that will speak eloquently to modern generations' (see review, p.75)



**WIN**

The poignant story of *The Sacred Veil* – Eric Whitacre's musical setting of poems by his friend Charles Silvestri, whose wife Julia died of cancer – was told in the February 2020 issue of *Choir & Organ*. The minimal accompaniment of just cello and piano accompaniment contribute towards making this a work of intimacy as well as profound emotion, and one that many people will relate to personally.

Courtesy of Signum Records, we have 2 copies of the CD, signed by the composer, to give away; quote code 'WHITACRE'.

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Ad Fontes AF 004

Rupert Gough's new arrangement of Pierre Villette's *Messe 'Da Pacem'* with organ accompaniment brings this French composer's neglected work back to public consciousness through the publication of the vocal score and the release of the premiere recording (see feature, p.14).

Courtesy of United Music Publishing and Ad Fontes, we have 5 sets of the vocal score and CD to give away; quote code 'VILLETTE'.



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# Place setting

Finding a precisely suitable location for the quire organ has presented Canterbury Cathedral with a headache for several centuries. Organist and Master of the Choristers **David Flood** tells the inside story of how Harrison & Harrison rose to the challenge in their reconstruction of the cathedral's Father Willis

Of all the ancient cathedrals in Britain, it is Canterbury that is best-known. Founded in 597 by a Benedictine monk, Augustine, sent by Pope Gregory, the present building has roots dating back nearly 1,000 years, since when it has withstood Viking raids, witnessed the murder of Archbishop Thomas Becket in 1170, changed status during the Dissolution of the Monasteries under Henry VIII, suffered damage in the English Civil Wars, and survived bombing during the second world war. The seat of the head of the Church of England and the Mother Church of the worldwide Anglican Communion, it is also part of a World Heritage site, and has an annual footfall of c.1m people.

Canterbury Cathedral as a building is a challenge to organ builders and organists.

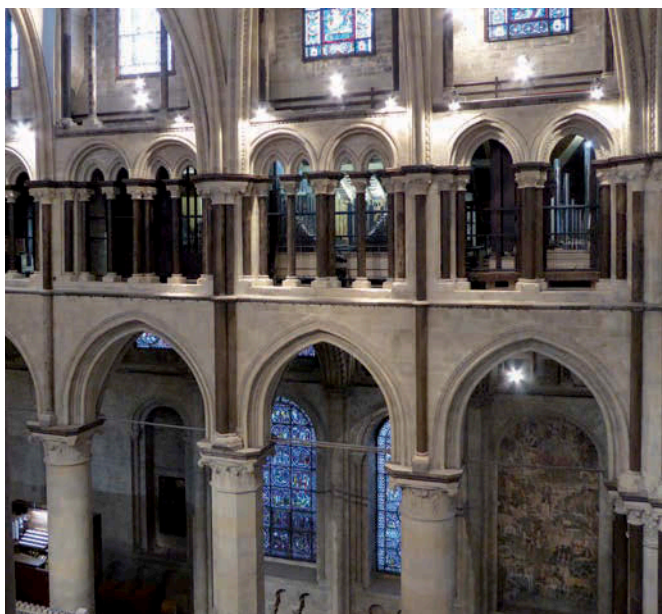
Being in two distinct parts – with the quire section extremely long, and the solid and impressive screen a significant partition from the nave – it is essentially two separate acoustic spaces. Of course, sound travels the length of the building and can create a very beautiful effect of distant music, but the sound of a distant organ is not often helpful during the liturgy.

Until 1979 there had never been a pipe organ in the nave, and leading a congregation there from the organ in the quire was essentially an impossible task. But the nave is used liturgically much more now than it once was, and the need to project organ sound there with some effect has coloured much of the developments over the last 50 years. When I first began to consider a significant revision of the organ,

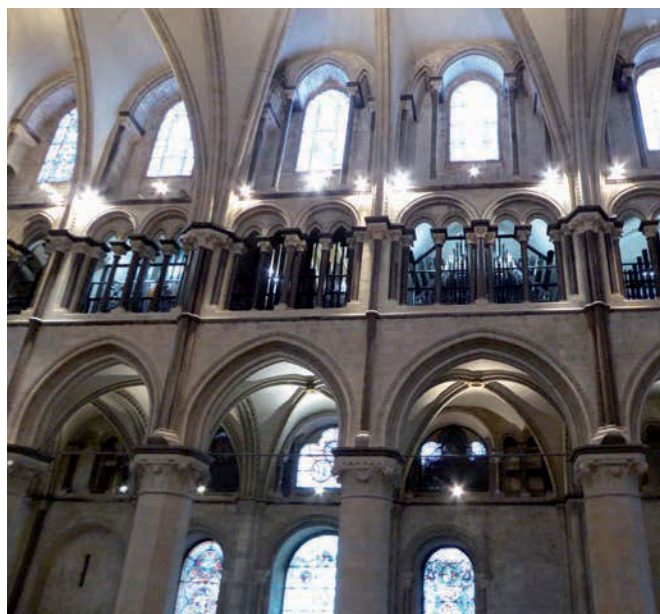
the plan was for two connected organs: a massive project. Quite quickly it became obvious that we should focus on the quire organ alone, since support of the Opus Dei is the most important role of the organ (Evensong is sung on seven days a week). After all, we have a (small) nave organ.

As organs had been in a number of locations around the quire, including (unsuccessfully) on the pulpitum screen in the 18th century (by Samuel Green in 1784), Henry Willis installed a four-manual instrument in the south triforium of the quire in 1886 – a project which caused him some anxiety. The installation of a case for the organ was refused on the grounds of its obstruction of the architectural lines, and the console was placed in the south quire aisle, at the western end, since connecting it >

◀ The quire levels of Canterbury Cathedral; (below) the console with Solo, Choir and Transept divisions (l) and Pedal, Swell and Great divisions (r)



ANDREW SCOTT



ANDREW SCOTT



## Canterbury Cathedral

### HENRY WILLIS (1886); HARRISON & HARRISON (2020)

**PEDAL**

* 1.	Double Open Wood (from 3)	32
* 2.	Sub Bourdon (from 6)	32
* 3.	Open Wood	16
4.	Open Diapason	16
5.	Violone	16
6.	Bourdon	16
7.	Lieblich Bourdon (from 19)	16
* 8.	Octave Wood (from 3)	8
9.	Octave	8
10.	Flute	8
11.	Super Octave	4
12.	Open Flute	4
13.	Mixture (19.22.26.29)	IV
14.	Contra Posaune	32
15.	Ophicleide	16
16.	Fagotto	16
17.	Posaune	8
18.	Clarion	4

*I Choir to Pedal; II Great to Pedal; III Swell to Pedal; IV Solo to Pedal; V Pedal Divide*

**CHOIR (UNENCLOSED)**

* 19.	Lieblich Bourdon	16
* 20.	Open Diapason	8
21.	Chimney Flute	8
* 22.	Dulciana	8

* 23.	Principal	4
* 24.	Stopped Flute (wood)	4
25.	Nazard	2 <sup>2</sup> / <sub>3</sub>
* 26.	Fifteenth	2
27.	Block Flute	2
28.	Tierce	1 <sup>3</sup> / <sub>5</sub>
* 29.	Mixture (15.19.22)	III
* 30.	Trumpet	8
31.	Corno di Bassetto	8

*VI Tremulant; VII Octave; VIII Unison Off;  
IX Sub Octave; X Swell to Choir; XI Solo to Choir*

**GREAT**

32.	Double Open Diapason	16
33.	Open Diapason I	8
34.	Open Diapason II	8
* 35.	Gamba	8
36.	Claribel Flute	8
37.	Stopped Diapason	8
38.	Principal	4
39.	Flûte Harmonique	4
40.	Twelfth	2 <sup>2</sup> / <sub>3</sub>
41.	Fifteenth	2
42.	Harmonic Piccolo	2
43.	Mixture (15.17.19.22)	IV
44.	Fourniture (19.22.26.29)	IV-V
45.	Trombone	16
46.	Trumpet	8
47.	Clarion	4

*XII Choir to Great; XIII Swell to Great;  
XIV Solo to Great; XV Reeds on Choir;  
XVI Reeds on Solo; XVII Manuals I & II exchange*

**SWELL (ENCLOSED)**

48.	Double Open Diapason	16
49.	Open Diapason	8
50.	Lieblich Gedact	8
51.	Salicional	8
52.	Vox Angelica (tenor c)	8
53.	Principal	4
* 54.	Lieblich Flute	4
55.	Flageolet	2
56.	Mixture (17.19.22)	III
57.	Mixture (15.19.22.26.29)	V
* 58.	Contra Hautboy	16
59.	Hautboy	8
* 60.	Vox Humana	8

*XVIII Tremulant*  
61. Double Trumpet 16  
62. Trumpet 8  
63. Clarion 4

*XIX Octave; XX Unison Off;  
XXI Sub Octave; XXII Solo to Swell*

**SOLO (ENCLOSED)**

* 64.	Viole d'Amour	8
* 65.	Voix Céleste (tenor c)	8
* 66.	Flûte Harmonique	8
* 67.	Celestina	4

* 68.	Concert Flute	4
* 69.	Piccolo Harmonique	2
* 70.	Cor Anglais	16
* 71.	Orchestral Oboe	8
* 72.	Clarinet	8

**XXIII Tremulant**

* 73.	French Horn	8
* 74.	Ophicleide	8
75.	Tuba	8
76.	Tuba Clarion	4

*XXIV Octave; XXV Unison Off  
XXVI Sub Octave; XXVII Tuba Shutters On*

**TRANSEPT GREAT**

* 77.	Bourdon	16
* 78.	Open Diapason	8
* 79.	Principal	4
* 80.	Twelfth	2 <sup>2</sup> / <sub>3</sub>
* 81.	Fifteenth	2
* 82.	Mixture (15.19.22.26)	IV
* 83.	Posaune	8

*XXVIII Transept on Choir; XXIX Transept on Solo*

**NAVE**

84.	Bourdon (from 89)	16
85.	Open Diapason	8
86.	Principal	4
87.	Fifteenth	2
88.	Mixture (19.22.26.29)	IV-V

*XXX Nave on Great; XXXI Nave on Solo*

**NAVE PEDAL**

89.	Bourdon	16
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*\* stops marked with an asterisk are new*

**Combination couplers**

*XXXII General Foot Pistons  
XXXIII Great & Pedal Pistons*

**Accessories**

*Eight foot pistons to the Pedal  
Eight pistons to each of the Choir, Great & Solo  
Eight pistons to the Swell duplicated by foot pistons  
Four pistons to the Nave  
Eight general pistons and general cancel*

*Reversible pistons: I-IV, X, XI, XII, XIII, XIV, XXII;  
1, 2, 14*

*Reversible foot pistons: II, XIII; 1, 2, 14*

*Two coupler pistons*

*Reversible piston for Full Organ*

*Stepper, operating general pistons in sequence*

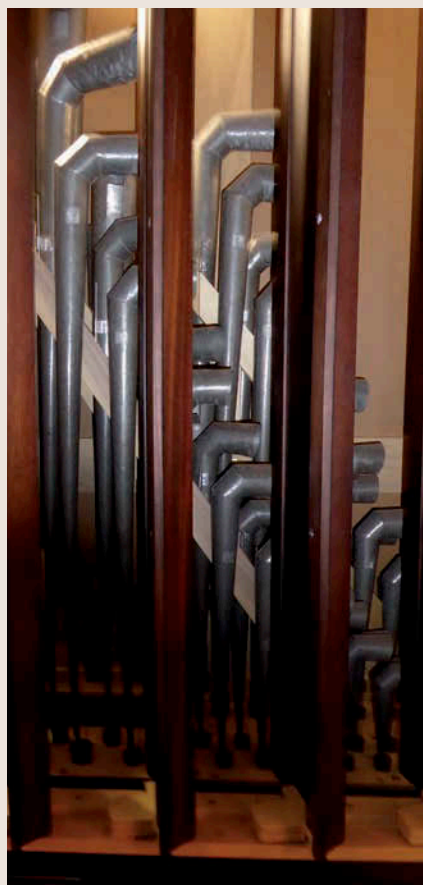
*999 general and 16 divisional piston memory levels*

*Two balanced swell pedals*

*Manual compass 61 notes; Pedal compass 32 notes*

*The actions are electro-pneumatic.*

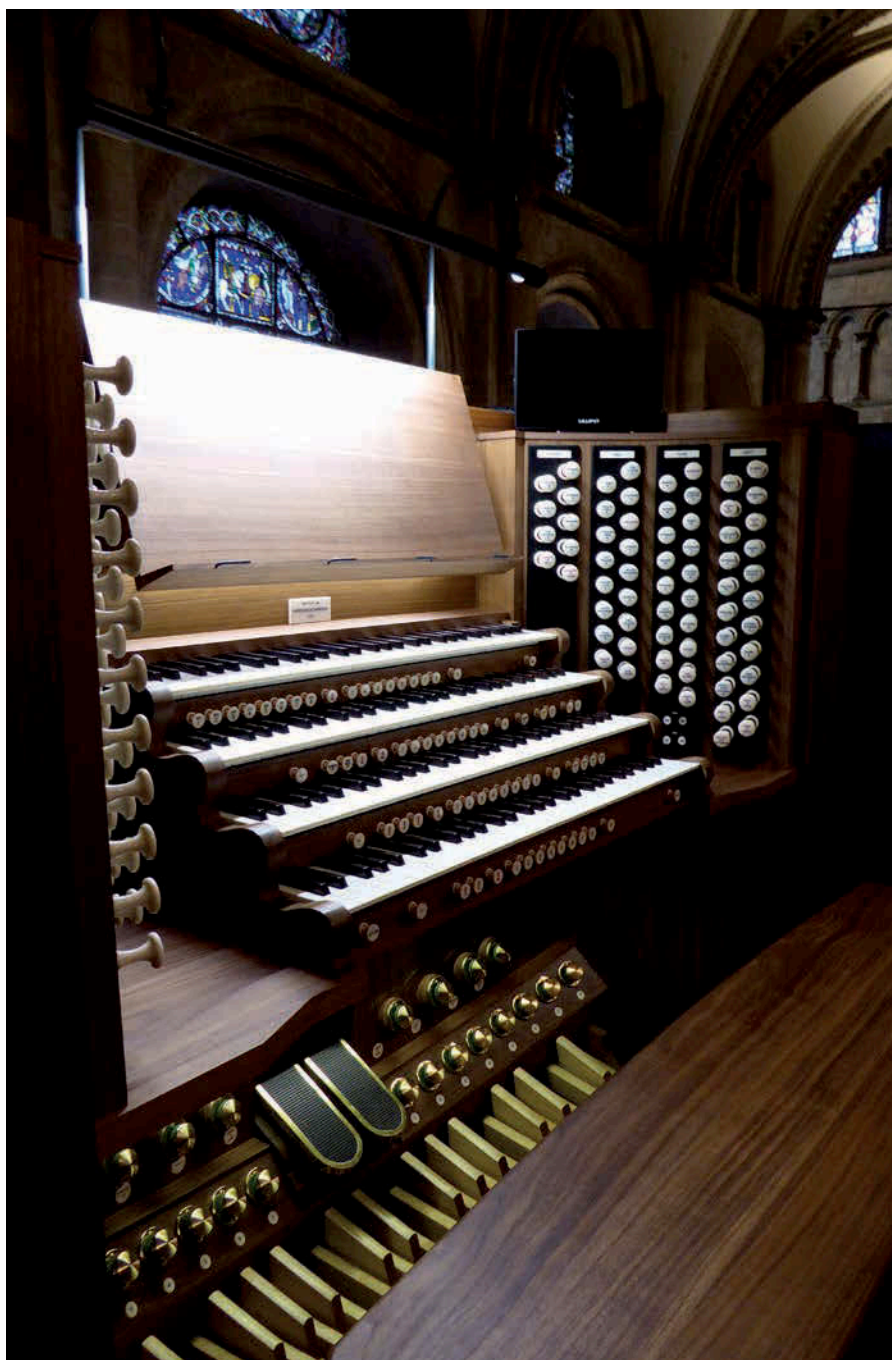
◀ Willis's Tubas are now enclosed in their own box



ANDREW SCOTT

◁ to the pipework posed huge problems owing to the distance and route for pneumatic tubing. Willis's reported comments about his project have echoed down the years: 'The great distance of the pipes from the player... is quite fatal to the performance of music... The confinement of the situation [the pipework in the triforium] further renders it impossible to produce any grand result... The organist is so badly placed as to deprive him of the power of appreciating the work he is doing.' The organ he eventually built took up all five of the bays above and, since the distance was too far for a completely pneumatic system, he invented a new electric transmission – real state-of-the-art technology at the time. After an enlargement in 1912 by Norman & Beard, this organ lasted without major intervention until 1933, when it was refurbished by Henry Willis III. By virtue of further improved electrical developments, the console was moved to the screen in 1949 which gave excellent views of the length of the cathedral, and – for the first time – the nave; but it was even further from the choir.

By 1978 Willis's organ, after two further rebuilds, was very unreliable and a significant remodelling was undertaken by N.P. Mander, which saw the organ reduced to three manuals – in the 1970s, 'small was beautiful'. Willis's Solo and Choir organs were discarded under the impression that they were not the finest examples of his work. (In an effort to create space in the organ the bottom notes of the 32ft flue had been sawn up in 1968, to be replaced with resultant pipework.) This organ retained all of Willis's core pipework for the Swell, Great and Pedal, to which a new Choir division was added, incorporating the grand Solo Tubas. Two ranks which remained from the Samuel Green organ of 1784 were incorporated. In an attempt to spread some appreciable sound to the nave, the organ was grouped at the western end of the triforium with the Swell at the extreme end, closest to the console. The Tubas were placed in front of the Swell, on the reckoning that they might have an effect in the nave. The space of Bell Harry Tower (the central tower) did not allow this to be achieved owing to the narrow opening from the choir and the height of the vault. The magnificent Tubas – just above the clergy seats in the quire and next to the console



▲ The console is of American walnut, and has stepper controls and a pedal divide system

– were very loud there, without the sound having much effect in the nave. Since the choir stalls had been moved to the east in the late 1960s to be more central in the quire, accompaniment had become a skill requiring experience. By the turn of the millennium it had long been obvious that the organ needed to be more suited to both the demands of the liturgy and the ever-widening role of this, the Mother Church of the Anglican Communion.

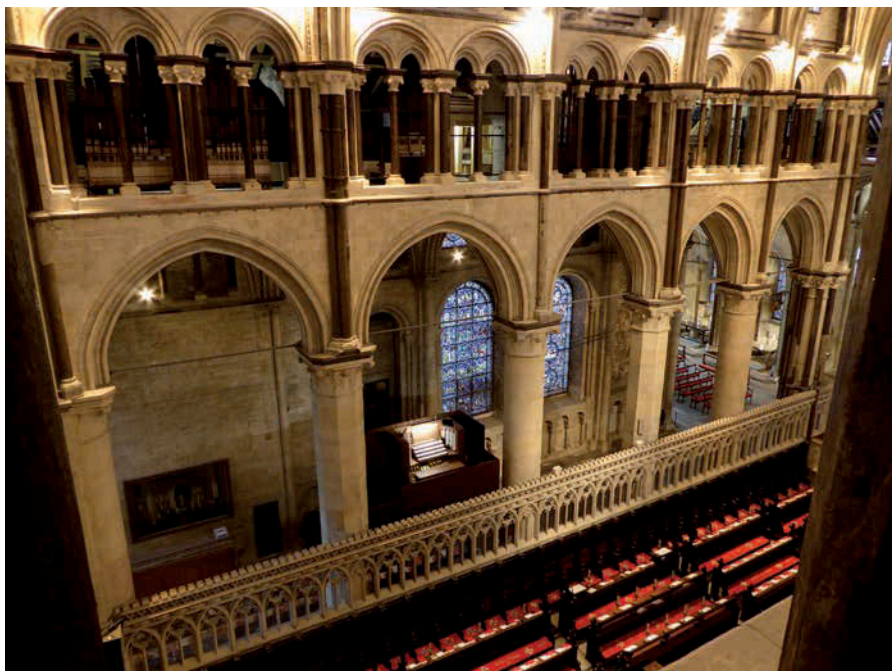
Under the advice and expertise of our tireless consultant, Dr William McVicker, long hours of deliberation, discussion, listening and just being in the cathedral led to a scheme that was presented to three eminent organ builders, from whom Harrison & Harrison was selected.

Space for the organ was achieved by using both the north and south sides of the quire triforium. The north triforium had never been used in any way but was found ▷

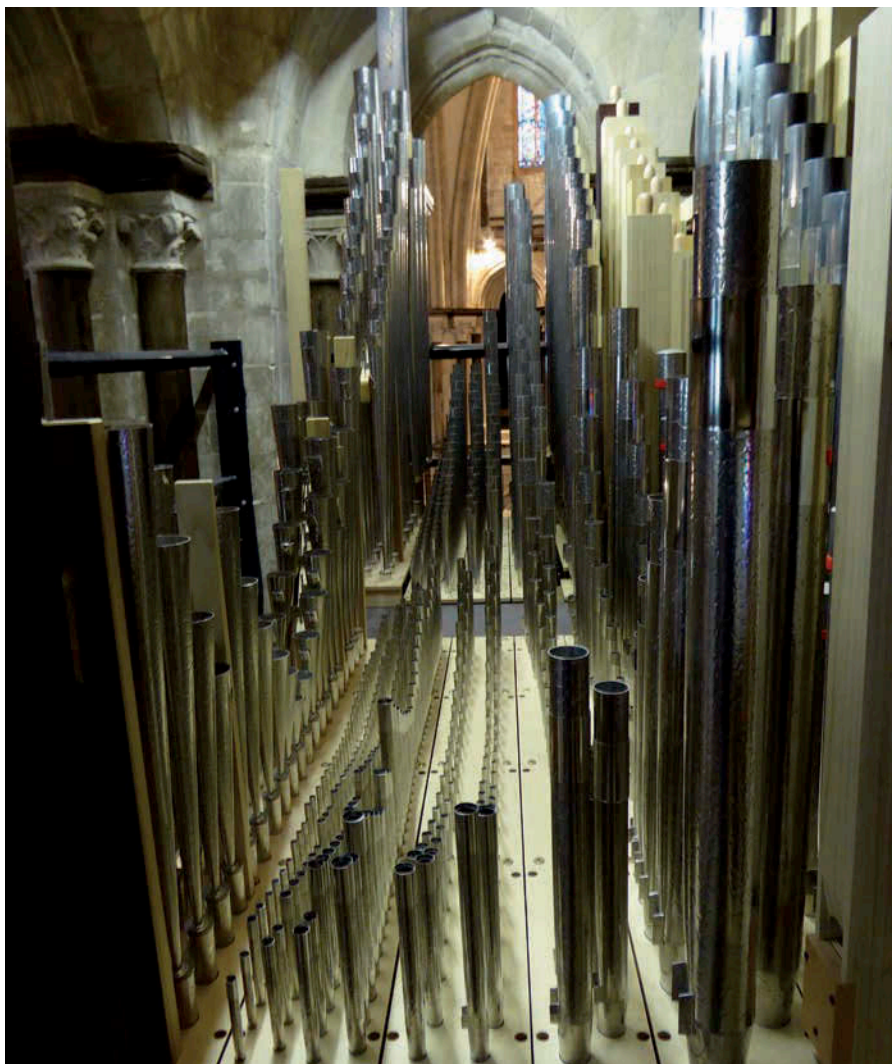


## CANTERBURY

ANDREW SCOTT



ANDREW SCOTT



◀ to be a perfectly suitable place in which to spread the organ. This entailed more than a year's detailed survey of temperature and humidity to give confidence that the organ would succeed in that situation. The roof line is substantially different between the sides, and this influenced our decision about the disposition of the organ.

With the choir stalls central to the body of the quire, the Swell organ was placed directly above on the south, with the new Solo organ opposite. Flanking the Swell, the Great is to the west and the Pedal to the east so that the core of the organ is together. Opposite, alongside the new Solo, to the east, is first a substantially new Choir organ which incorporates a few of the former Mander ranks, revoiced, and then, at the far eastern end, a new Transept organ: a bold chorus designed to support the congregation towards the High Altar and beyond. To complete the picture, the extreme western end of the north side, taking up two complete bays, is a new Open Wood, giving us the long-awaited full-length 32ft tone, plus 16ft and 8ft pitches. The longest pipes lie along the floor, while the shorter pipes stand where the roof gives greatest height. Willis's Tubas are now enclosed in their own box, standing diagonally across the eastern end on the south side, so as to give as wide an effect as possible, addressing both the whole quire and the eastern end. The box helps both projection and versatility. Just behind them lies our other, soft, 32ft rank, so we have true foundation tone on both sides.

The sound of the organ remains unmistakably Willis. The Harrison team, and in particular head voicer Andy Scott, have been meticulous in matching characteristic Willis material so that the many new additions to the organ can combine perfectly with the fine 1886 foundation. With wind pressures now tailored to the most effective speech of each rank, the organ speaks with one distinct voice. The new Solo division is remarkable in giving such a full palette of distinctive

► The console is located on a specially designed platform so organist and choir can be in immediate contact

◀ A new Transept organ has been added, designed to support the congregation towards the High Altar and beyond

tone, including (at my request) a French Horn and a 16ft Cor anglais. The versatility of this and other divisions is astonishing: unexpected combinations of stops produce surprising new colours.

Locating the console so that organist and choir could be in immediate contact was another challenge. To bring the organist into view after more than 70 years of being out of sight needed careful consideration. As soon as we discovered what a revelation it was to hear the choir from a level above the Eastray screen which surrounds the choir, we knew that the console had to be at that height. A new platform, designed by architects Caruso St John, now stands in the north quire aisle, just behind the choir stalls and directly opposite the Great, Swell and Pedal divisions. At last, we can hear each other and the organist can hear the organ directly. The sound from the Solo, Choir and Transept divisions is clear and heard from directly above.

The console is designed to be as economical in space as possible, but the organist is now on view. Being able to see the organist at work partners well with the work in the choir stalls. With curved stop jambs and (we trust) everything where it might be expected to be found, the American walnut console is a masterpiece, with the fine workmanship we have come to expect. We have tried to 'future-proof' it, including stepper controls and a pedal divide system.

This project, which has been nearly 15 years from conception to delivery, has required huge energy from a large number of people: the Harrison & Harrison team demonstrated not just consummate professionalism and friendliness, but also conviction and passion for the instrument; and fundraising by the Canterbury Cathedral Trust and the Friends of Canterbury Cathedral was imaginative and energetic. It has all been enormously worthwhile, and the Mother Church now has an instrument befitting her international stature. ■

*David Flood has been Organist and Master of the Choristers at Canterbury Cathedral since 1988. He was previously assistant organist there from 1978-86, and organist of Lincoln Cathedral 1986-88.*



# Freestyle BY GRAEME KAY

## Zooming in on worship

In the last few weeks my role as director of music at Orford Church has morphed into something else entirely: I have extended my day job to become de facto media manager for the many churches in the Suffolk coastal benefice in the centre of which St Bartholomew's sits. I am not alone in this. Up and down the country, organists and choirs have been furloughed and churches have been forced to embrace new technology – some willingly, some reluctantly (a colleague was grappling with a vicar for whom attaching a document to an email was a huge struggle) – as clergy, congregations and musicians have sought to come to terms first of all with the draconian measures imposed by the church authorities regarding access to churches for the professional staff, and latterly for congregants desperate to reconnect with their spiritual homes.

Into the breach rode Zoom. By the end of March this American conferencing software appeared to be carrying the fortunes of Christian worship throughout the country on its shoulders. I witnessed some dire experiments in the early days, owing to a basic misunderstanding of Zoom's functionality: praying and singing together is impossible as Zoom is programmed to seek out the speaker, which means the person (or off-camera dog, or child...) making the most noise. Zoom can't handle organ sound.

As Zoom, YouTube and streamed services are clearly here to stay – particularly in benefices with small scattered congregations and clergy shortages – even as some measure of normality returns, it might be worth sharing some experience of how we have made it work. I basically function as host and sound mixer for the services. To achieve this smoothly my laptop has a second screen, which is essential. Before the service I send out the Zoom URL with pdfs of the order of service, readings sheet and the hymns. Participants arrive with mikes open and can chat. Using the 'share screen' facility, as a call to prayer I play out a video from a library of bells videos which I have created using still images and sound recordings. When the service starts, I mute everyone and call up the celebrant. Readers are unmuted at their appropriate cues then muted after. So far so good, but what about the music? The answer is that using 'share screen' I play out pre-recorded hymns, with a soundtrack made into a video with the words displayed in full as the video plays out. The paradox is that in combined services which are Zoomed with a live congregation present, the Zoomers are allowed to sing at home but those in the church are not.

But where do the recordings come from? As access restrictions eased, I called for volunteers and organised recording sessions, using a good quality portable digital recorder, with what we dubbed the 'Lockdown Choir', one to a part and strictly socially distanced. It was essential that everyone not only was, but felt, safe. Using a rehearse-record routine, we banked six hymns in each session and now have enough to last till September.

As any choir director knows, there is an enormous amount of musical depth to be explored in even the most basic of hymns, and this concentration of disciplined effort clearly served as a rewarding musical workout to restore both vocal agility and – even more importantly – some mental equilibrium to the singers who had been deprived of their weekly opportunity to meet, learn, rehearse and perform. Our lockdown hymns are no substitute for Vierne's wonderful *Messe solennelle* for two organs which we were only a few weeks from performing at Easter – a project the choir had lapped up. But the Zoom congregants who hear them as the hymns play out in good sound appreciate that this is their choir, not a commercial substitute, and the feeling of commitment and common purpose is palpable. ■

*Graeme Kay is a digital platforms producer for BBC Radio 3 and 4.*



▲ Zoom organ: it didn't work



Seán Doherty

## Stella celi extirpavit

Text: 15th-century Marian Hymn from the time of the Black Death

A heartfelt medieval cry still resonates today, as Seán Doherty explains to **Shirley Ratcliffe** about his new work

COURTESY SEÁN DOHERTY



▲ Seán Doherty has 'a gift for choosing texts'

**A**n emotive 15th-century text – a plea for deliverance from the plague – was chosen by Irish composer Seán Doherty for his *C&O* commission for Graham Ross and the Choir of Clare College. It was written at a time when Doherty was experiencing personal tragedy as well as the Covid-19 pandemic, and he gives a graphic

description of his conflicting emotions during lockdown:

'The start was surprisingly enjoyable: burning banana bread, filming TikToks, making a sourdough starter that didn't start, high-kicking with Joe Wicks, playing the fiddle and working with Irish poet Ciara Ní É on a choral piece that will

celebrate the return to normal life after the pandemic.

'This was until I got the devastating news that my older brother, Brendan, had died. His death was sudden and unexpected. We were plunged into the cruel absurdities of a funeral in lockdown: I couldn't hug my nephew and niece, my partner wasn't able to travel home to Derry with me, and my younger brother was stuck in New Zealand. A negative test for Covid-19 at least granted the dignity of a funeral, albeit restricted. Hundreds of people paid their respects by lining the streets in a socially distanced way and watching the funeral service on their phones as it was live-streamed. Though we were a family in isolation, we were consoled by the many choirs who sent sympathy messages, cards and flowers. In place of their physical attendance, New Dublin Voices [the choir Doherty sings with] recorded a moving virtual-choir performance of *Be Still My Soul* that was played at the graveside.'

*Stella celi extirpavit* was written in May 2020, still at the height of the Covid crisis, when Doherty was 'weighed down with the grief of the bereavement, the cruelty of the lockdown restrictions, and the alarm of the pandemic. You can perhaps hear the urgency in the refrain which increases in intensity with each repetition *Audi nos; Salva nos* (Hear us; Save us).'

Doherty has a gift for choosing texts, and explains that his inspiration can be sparked from anywhere, including sometimes unlikely sources, and not always in a conventional way: 'I use religious texts in a purely mythological, but no less profound sense. The human experience underpinning these texts is universal. The urgency with

which the first composer of *Stella celi extirpavit* [John Cooke (?)] petitioned the Virgin Mary for salvation from the plague is the same urgency with which I now petition immunologists to develop a safe vaccine for Covid-19.

Doherty says he is an Irish stereotype, a born storyteller: 'The link between music and rhetoric has always been natural to me. The literary giants of my hometown, Brian Friel and Seamus Heaney, loom large in my artistic imagination.'

Not coming from a musical family, Doherty was introduced to music through the Irish fiddle tradition: 'I attended classes of the organisation Comhaltas Ceoltóirí Éireann, which had two branches in Derry city, both with wonderful fiddle tutors, which was a fantastic start to my musical education. From there I learned tunes by going to small, informal gatherings with other traditional musicians and attending festivals.'

## 'I use religious texts in a purely mythological, but no less profound sense. The human experience underpinning them is universal'

Doherty is now assistant professor of music at Dublin City University, where, together with his colleague Dr Róisín Blunnie, he leads Ireland's first MA in Choral Studies. The course combines the study of composition, conducting, historical approaches and choral-arts infrastructure within a single programme: 'We had our first intake last year – a fantastic group of really committed students – and it has been enormously rewarding and fun, even with the challenge of shifting to online delivery.' Blunnie's choir, Laetare Vocal Ensemble, will shortly release its album *Ghost Songs*, which will feature a number of Doherty's choral works, including the title track. Though a musicologist whose PhD thesis was on 17th-century English music theory, Doherty's main research interest now is contemporary music. 'My most recent article – an analysis of James MacMillan's Fourth Symphony – demonstrated that the symphony follows the ground plan of the Roman Catholic Mass by quoting from and alluding to a wide variety of pre-existing music.' He is now working on

an analysis of MacMillan's 40-part motet *Vidi aquam* and its relationship to its historical model, Thomas Tallis's *Spem in alium*.

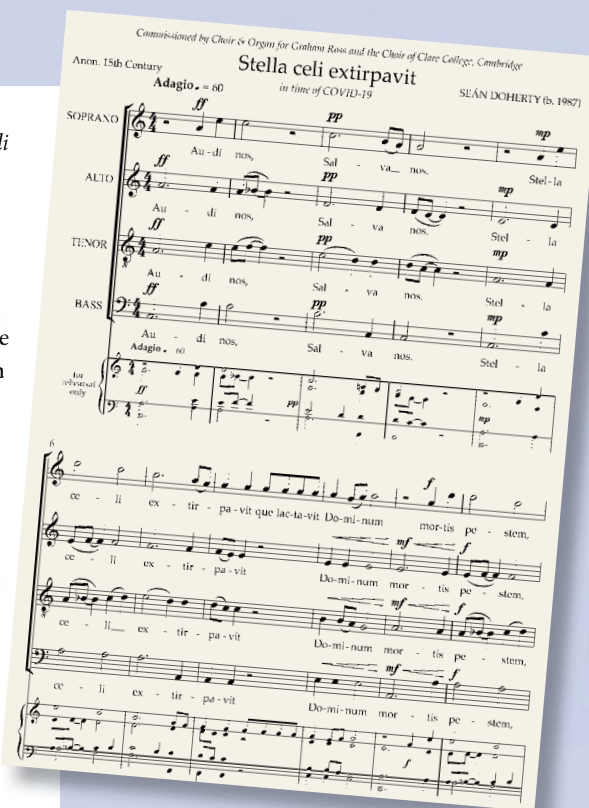
Competitions were important to Doherty at the start of his career as a composer. 'Not having come to composition through a conventional route, competitions allowed me to prove I was a composer, to myself as much as to anyone else. Winning them allowed me to develop my profile as a composer to the extent where I only have time to write to commission. Losing far more competitions than I've won has taught me lessons about expectations, tenacity and luck. I've shifted to the other side of the adjudication panel in the last few years, and I adjudicate with an appreciation of the huge effort that goes into each entry.'

Doherty's work has received international status and two premieres stand out for him: when New Dublin Voices premiered *Snow Dance for the Dead*

at the World Symposium on Choral Music in Barcelona 2017, and when the World Youth Choir premiered *I am the World* at the World Choral Expo in Lisbon last year. Two premieres he had been particularly looking forward to this year, but which were then postponed, were of *Hail! Gladdening Light* to be given by the Irish choir Resurgam, and *I Can't Tell* for the Turkish State Choir. Also on hold is an album of the composer's choral works that New Dublin Voices were preparing to record.

Covid-19 is adversely affecting many professions and one of the worst hit is the music world which, at the time of writing, sees precious little light at the end of the tunnel. It is a well-known medical fact that singing provides some of the best positive therapy, and we desperately need a safe vaccine so we can all be singing together safely. While the virtual choir is a stopgap, it can never replace the great choral tradition of singing in groups which has been developing for centuries. ■

[seandohertymusic.com](http://seandohertymusic.com)



### CORONAVIRUS

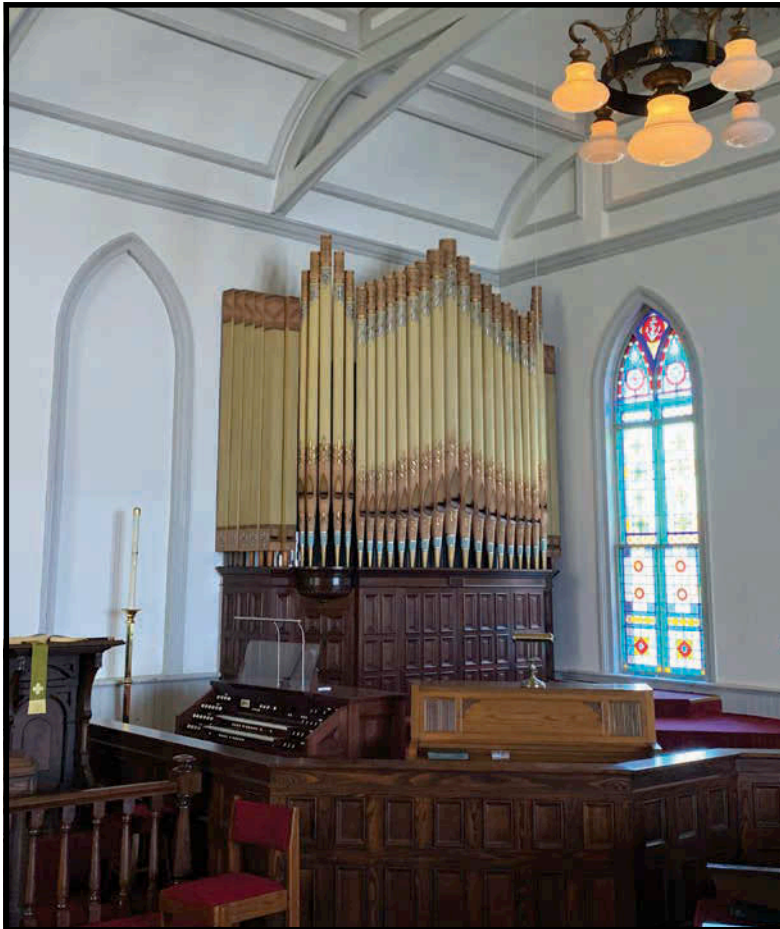
In view of the coronavirus pandemic, the premiere of *Stella celi extirpavit* has been postponed. Details will be announced in due course.

The score of *Stella celi extirpavit* will be placed online when this issue is published, but to ensure that readers may benefit from the full six months' free download, extensions will be given to this and to other scores already online. The scores of the New Music commissions for May/June and July/August will be posted online at a later date. Visit [choirandorgan.com](http://choirandorgan.com) and click on New Music series for updates.

New Music is a series of pieces for choir or organ by talented young composers featured in *Choir & Organ*.

New Music scores are available under licence to be printed free of charge for a period of six months, after which copies must be destroyed as copyright reverts to the composer. See our website for details.



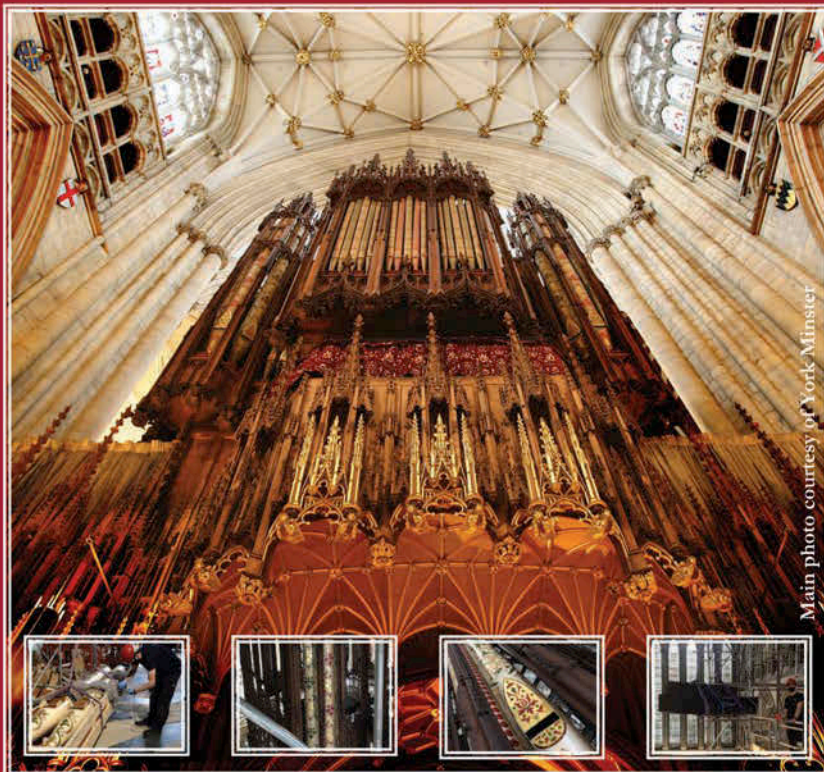


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# 'A solitary pursuit'

As a cathedral chorister and then an organ scholar, composer Benjamin Woodgates gained a firm grounding in liturgical music – which also stood him in good stead for his latest film soundtrack, as he explains to Harriet Clifford

APRIL ROCHA

▲ In the mix: composer, orchestrator and conductor Benjamin Woodgates

**I**'ve grown from almost nothing,' admits composer Benjamin Woodgates humbly, when asked how he has changed over the last four years since he was commissioned to write a Benedicite for St Paul's Cathedral as part of *Choir & Organ's* New Music series. 'I was finding outlets to write music fairly few and far between, so I was very grateful to get any chance, especially to do something in St Paul's.' Woodgates was a chorister at Chichester Cathedral as a boy, going on to be involved in choral music every night of the week between the ages of 18 and 22 when he was an organ scholar at Oxford.

From there, he has paved his way as a composer, although he is the first to acknowledge that this career path hasn't always been plain sailing: 'I think until about two or three years ago, I was regularly tempted – in quite a serious way – to pack it all in.' He speaks openly about the challenge for music colleges and institutions to prepare students for the 'real' world, while also allowing them to grow as composers: 'There's a balance between having it as a sort of sacred space to discover yourself as a composer, and leaving college, university or school with really no idea of how you're going to make a living.'

Woodgates managed to do just that by undertaking a lot of private teaching as well

as orchestrating and expanding his musical reach, although others take different routes. 'That's not necessarily a bad thing, because I've found that – in my case – doing music for media or arranging music has been a really refreshing tonic to sitting on my own in a room with a blank sheet of paper. Composing is quite a solitary pursuit unless you're in education. I think it's a positive thing that composers are almost forced to have another string to their bow.'

'I feel I've been really lucky since [my *C&O* commission] to get a rich variety of commissions to work for. For the first time in

limbed narrative.' It also involves working with a director to try and realise their vision for a film. 'I find that I write less cluttered music than I would if there was no visual content. Ultimately the proof's in the pudding as to whether it works. It's definitely music written to work against the film rather than on a soundtrack CD.'

After a successful audition, Woodgates recently spent six months writing the score for a feature-length film, which was premiered at the Sundance Film Festival in January 2020. Undoubtedly his biggest project to date, *Dream Horse* stars Damian Lewis and Toni Colette

## 'Music for media is not the only centre of attention; it's one arm of a multi-limbed narrative'

my life, I've actually had to pick and choose between projects, which is a lovely problem to have.' He now sustains himself with a mixture of composition, arrangement and orchestration, writing simultaneously for commercial media like films, as well as concert halls and places of worship.

Writing for media, he finds the visual stimulus 'reassuring' in the same way that he finds a text reassuring: 'The music is not the only centre of attention. It's one arm of a multi-

and is a dramatisation of a true story, which follows a group of Welsh villagers in the early 2000s, who gathered together the funds to breed and rear a racehorse. 'We were looking at a sound for the village and we wanted to create music which spoke of the people in that valley. One direction we tried was a croaky aesthetic, but it's not really true to character. We ended up cobbling together – a bit like the syndicate in the film cobbled together – a selection of slightly rag-tag, dusty, forgotten, unloved but >





BENJAMIN WOODGATES



KERRY BROWN

▲ A recording session for Euros Lyn's film *Dream Horse*, using three different pianos; (r) a still from the film, with Owen Teale (Brian), Di Botcher (Nerys), Brian Doherty (Gordon), Toni Collette (Jan), Damian Lewis (Howard) and Anthony O'Donnell (Maldwyn)

spirited instruments.' One of these was the harmonium: 'The one I really wanted to use was the one I grew up with, which is sadly a quarter-tone too sharp. What we hired in the end was a very simple instrument by R.F. Stevens.' It was a compact harmonium dating back to the 1950s or 60s with three stops – a 16ft Bourdon, an 8ft Diapason and a 4ft Principal. 'It had an almost instant connection between the pressure of air and the sound – it sounded almost like an accordion.'

'When captured very close, you got this rich, dusty, wheezy sound, which we felt suited this community, which has essentially been left behind by the decline in major industry. It's a bit like the harmonium, which has been left unloved at the back of the cupboard but has really got a lot to give.' The harmonium is part of a six-piece ensemble which accompanies the village scenes and also includes an accordion, an upright piano ('again a slightly dusty, seen-better-days instrument'), a cello and a fiddle. The scenes at the races are scored for a string orchestra, recorded by the London Contemporary Orchestra, while the harmonium is played by Craig White. Choosing this player was important, as it 'needed to be someone who is prepared to use it as an expressive instrument – coming from their foot pedalling as much as from their hands.' Woodgates didn't want a binary pipe organ approach, but rather 'all the stages in between, on and off.'

He also worked with two choirs – members of Cór CF1 and CBC Voices conducted by Eilir Owen – who bolstered the on-screen 'spontaneous' singing. 'We worked with them both to create a really strong musical sound, and also to make sure it sounded real and

spontaneous, and not rehearsed or conducted. They were far too well-rehearsed at the beginning of the recording session – their consonants were too "together", their diction was too good. We had to transform them into a slightly drunken rabble.'

Woodgates seems to have taken this project in his stride, but doesn't mind admitting that writing for his first feature-length film came with an element of self-imposed pressure. 'You always go into these jobs trying to hold your head high and pretend you've done this all before, but in reality I was learning everything for the first time and the fear of doing it badly or getting thrown off the project was ever-present. On the other hand, it was reassuring to know that even before I started I could see that the film – just based on the director's work in the past – was going to be a real quality piece of work, and a lot of love had gone into it.'

Alongside his work for media, Woodgates has written a setting of Psalm 67 for a friend's wedding, as well as a choral piece for his own wedding about a year ago. He has also worked on a number of arrangements for groups such as the Swingles: 'It's a very different process. You never have that "blank page" fear with arrangements. I don't want to belittle it, but it feels more of a craft than an art, and I love that.' Other arrangements and collaborations under his belt include a project with Martin Green, an accordion player with the band Lau, which involved expanding an immersive audio installation on the River Tyne for orchestra and chorus: 'It was a fantastic mixture of music and real sound design, and just like nothing I'd ever done before.'

Having grown up singing, Woodgates finds writing choral music comforting in

many ways. 'I felt more confident writing for [choirs] than writing for a whole orchestra of instruments I've never picked up.' He explains that writing for voices is an interesting exercise: 'In order for a choral piece to come off in performance, everyone who's singing it has got to understand the relationship between the notes. For another instrument, where there's muscle-memory, you can play anything that's notated on the page. As a result, it forces composers to write music which the talented musicians that are singing it can actually grasp and understand themselves.'

Speaking more generally about the current landscape of classical music, Woodgates says, 'You'd expect that it would be a casualty of the digital world, but actually it's alive and well. I feel that there's still a question being asked about what direction classical music should take and what is its position in the world.' Challenges confronting contemporary composers include a resistance to new music. Nonetheless, he remains optimistic: 'I think it's exciting that there seems to be more of a young public interest in perhaps more experimental music. I would love to hear more music which isn't post-minimalist, and is also both exciting and accessible.'

With his wide-ranging scope of projects and ideas, there is really only one question left to ask: what does Ben Woodgates's working day look like? 'Should I lie and say it's very structured and grown-up?' he laughs. 'I love the hours in the morning when you're not quite awake yet, but I also find it very hard to actually get up for them – I'm not a morning person.' ■

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## PORTSMOUTH CATHEDRAL



### Music in Portsmouth Cathedral

Portsmouth Cathedral Choir and The Portsmouth Grammar School offer unique opportunities for **altos, tenors, basses** and an **organ scholar** for the academic year 2021/22.

Opportunities exist for gap year students (pre or post University) to spend a year working with the **Portsmouth Cathedral Choirs**, whilst working as departmental assistants at one of the country's leading co-educational schools, **The Portsmouth Grammar School**. The year involves daily choral worship in the Cathedral, major concerts and **BBC broadcasts**, choir tours (Iceland 2019, Finland 2020, Poland 2021) and CD recordings.

Recent Portsmouth scholars now sing in Westminster Cathedral Choir, Westminster Abbey Choir, King's College Cambridge and New College Oxford, as well as Winchester Cathedral and York Minster Choirs and with **major UK groups** such as the Monteverdi Choir, Stille Antico and The Sixteen.

Regular vocal/organ tuition provided. Accommodation available. Remuneration circa £9,000.

### Further Details from

**Dr David Price**  
[music@portsmouthcathedral.org.uk](mailto:music@portsmouthcathedral.org.uk)  
023 9282 3300  
[portsmouthcathedral.org.uk/music/pgs.org.uk](http://portsmouthcathedral.org.uk/music/pgs.org.uk)



## CANTERBURY cathedral VOICE TRIALS

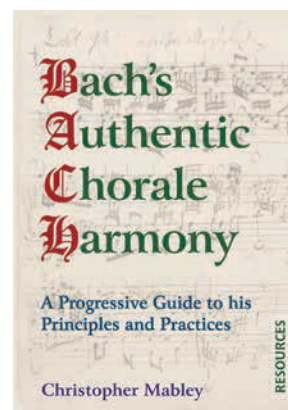
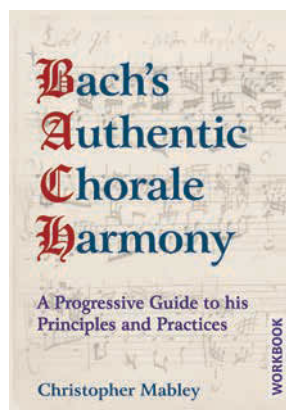
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Substantial scholarships are awarded and choristers enjoy the superb and extensive facilities of St Edmund's School.

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For further details  
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**01227 865242**  
[davidf@canterbury-cathedral.org](mailto:davidf@canterbury-cathedral.org)



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# Scholarships & voice trials

Guide to cathedrals, churches, universities and schools offering places for choristers, choral scholars and organists

**Key:** c = chorister, cs = choral scholar, o = organ scholar  
**Gap** = offers opportunities for gap year students  
**Listings are by town/city, then by the name of the institution, eg London, Westminster Abbey**

**A**  
**Aberdeen, St Andrew's Cathedral**  
**Scholarships** cs, o  
**Deadline** apply all year round.  
**Contact** Christopher Cromar, master of music 01224 640119, [cathedral@aberdeen.anglican.org](mailto:cathedral@aberdeen.anglican.org)  
[www.cathedral.aberdeen.anglican.org](http://www.cathedral.aberdeen.anglican.org)

**B**  
**Bangor Cathedral**  
**Scholarships** c (boys & girls; incl. funding for instr & vocal tuition and exam fees), cs, o  
**Gap** yes  
**Deadline** none  
**Open morning (Sing with the Choristers)** at regular intervals, apply for details  
**Auditions** by appointment  
**Contact** Paul Booth 01248 354015, [music@bangorcathedral.org.uk](mailto:music@bangorcathedral.org.uk)  
[www.bangorcathedral.org.uk](http://www.bangorcathedral.org.uk)  
**Birmingham Cathedral**  
**Scholarships** c (boys & girls), cs (men & women)  
**Gap** yes  
**Contact** David Hardie, head of music, [david.hardie@birminghamcathedral.com](mailto:david.hardie@birminghamcathedral.com)  
[www.birminghamcathedral.com](http://www.birminghamcathedral.com)  
**Blackburn Cathedral**  
**Scholarships** cs, o  
**Gap** students or recent post-grads  
**Contact** John Robinson 01254 277 442, [john.robinson@blackburncathedral.co.uk](mailto:john.robinson@blackburncathedral.co.uk)  
[www.blackburncathedral.com](http://www.blackburncathedral.com)

**Brighton College**  
**Scholarships** cs, o (boys & girls)  
**Gap** yes (post-grad)  
**Contact** Admissions Dept, 01273 704200, [registrar@brightoncollege.net](mailto:registrar@brightoncollege.net)  
[www.brightoncollege.org.uk](http://www.brightoncollege.org.uk)  
**Bristol University / Bristol Cathedral / St Mary Redcliffe / St Paul's, Clifton**  
**Scholarships** c, o  
**Contact** Megan Holmes 0117 331 4044, [music-resources@bristol.ac.uk](mailto:music-resources@bristol.ac.uk)  
[www.bris.ac.uk/music/scholarships](http://www.bris.ac.uk/music/scholarships)  
**Bristol, Clifton Cathedral**  
**Scholarships** cs (men & women 16+), o  
**Gap** yes  
**Trials** by appointment  
**Contact** Richard Jeffrey-Gray, [music@cliftondiocese.com](mailto:music@cliftondiocese.com)  
[www.facebook.com/cliftonmusicservice](https://www.facebook.com/cliftonmusicservice)

**C**  
**Cambridge University (all colleges)**  
**Scholarships** c (boys – King's & St John's only – contact individual colleges), cs (men & women), o

**Contact** (c & cs) Peter Foggitt ([pif21@cam.ac.uk](mailto:pif21@cam.ac.uk)); (o) Andrew Arthur, [aa373@cam.ac.uk](mailto:aa373@cam.ac.uk)  
[www.cam.ac.uk/admissions/undergraduate/musicawards](http://www.cam.ac.uk/admissions/undergraduate/musicawards)  
**Cambridge, St John's College**  
**Scholarships** c (boys)  
**Trials** Mr Nethsingha is available to hear potential applicants all year round  
**Contact** Juliet Francis 01223 760193, [j.francis@joh.cam.ac.uk](mailto:j.francis@joh.cam.ac.uk)  
[www.sjcchoir.co.uk](http://www.sjcchoir.co.uk)  
**Canterbury, Christ Church Cathedral**  
**Scholarships** c (boys)  
**Open days** St Edmund's School & Choir House  
**Trials** By appointment, throughout the year  
**Contact** David Flood 01227 865242, [david.flood@canterbury-cathedral.org](mailto:david.flood@canterbury-cathedral.org)  
[www.canterbury-cathedral.org/worship/choir](http://www.canterbury-cathedral.org/worship/choir)

**Cardiff Metropolitan Cathedral**  
**Scholarships** c, cs & o  
**Gap** yes  
**Trials** by appointment at various points through the year  
**Contact** Dominic Neville 07727 138621, [dominicneville@cantab.net](mailto:dominicneville@cantab.net), [dpnmetropolitan@gmail.com](mailto:dpnmetropolitan@gmail.com)  
[www.cardiffcathedralchoir.org](http://www.cardiffcathedralchoir.org)  
**Carlisle Cathedral**  
**Scholarships** c (boys & girls), cs (men)  
**Gap** yes  
**Deadline** none  
**Contact** Veronica Stockdale, Music dept administrator 01228 547916, [musicadmin@carlislecathedral.org.uk](mailto:musicadmin@carlislecathedral.org.uk)  
[www.carlislecathedral.org.uk](http://www.carlislecathedral.org.uk)

**Chelmsford Cathedral**  
**Scholarships** c (boys & girls), cs (incl juniors 15-18 yrs), o  
**Gap** yes  
**Deadline** See website  
**Trials** (o) autumn, (cs) autumn and spring, (c) throughout the year  
**Contact** Elspeth Manders 01245 294481, [music@chelmsfordcathedral.org.uk](mailto:music@chelmsfordcathedral.org.uk)  
[www.chelmsfordcathedral.org.uk](http://www.chelmsfordcathedral.org.uk)  
**Cheltenham College**  
**Scholarships** c (11+, 13+, 16+), cs, o  
**Contact** Director of music, Gordon Busbridge 01242 265600, [gordon@cheltenhamcollege.org](mailto:gordon@cheltenhamcollege.org)  
[www.cheltenhamcollege.org](http://www.cheltenhamcollege.org)  
 (11+) Mrs Lucinda Roskilly 01242 522639, [l.roskilly@cheltenhamcollege.org](mailto:l.roskilly@cheltenhamcollege.org)  
 org: (13+, 16+) Ms Annalouise McQuilkin 01242 265 662, [registrar@cheltenhamcollege.org](mailto:registrar@cheltenhamcollege.org)  
[www.cheltenhamcollege.org](http://www.cheltenhamcollege.org)

**Cheltenham, Dean Close School**  
**Scholarships** c, o  
**Contact** 01242 258070  
[www.deanclose.org.uk](http://www.deanclose.org.uk)  
**Chester Cathedral**  
**Scholarships** c, cs  
**Deadline** Auditions are available throughout the year



▲ Young choristers at Ely Cathedral

**Contact** Philip Rushforth 01244 500974, [philip.rushforth@chestercathedral.com](mailto:philip.rushforth@chestercathedral.com)  
[www.chestercathedralchoir.co.uk](http://www.chestercathedralchoir.co.uk)  
**Chichester Cathedral**  
**Scholarships** c, o  
**Trials** throughout the year  
**Contact** Richard Paterson 01243 812487, [liturgymusic@chichestercathedral.org.uk](mailto:liturgymusic@chichestercathedral.org.uk)  
[www.chichestercathedral.org.uk](http://www.chichestercathedral.org.uk)

**D**  
**Derby Cathedral**  
**Scholarships** c (girls and boys from year 3), cs, o (for students at Derby, Nottingham, Birmingham or any other local universities), o  
**Trials** The director of music is happy to hear from applicants all year round.  
**Contact** Alexander Binns 07760 766199, [alexander@derbycathedral.org](mailto:alexander@derbycathedral.org)  
[www.derbycathedral.org](http://www.derbycathedral.org)  
**Dublin, Christ Church Cathedral**  
**Scholarships** c (girls), cs, o  
**Gap** yes  
**Contact** Ian Keatley +353 1 677 8099, [ian@christchurch.ie](mailto:ian@christchurch.ie)  
[www.christchurchcathedral.ie](http://www.christchurchcathedral.ie)  
**Dublin, St Patrick's Cathedral**  
**Scholarships** c (boys), o  
**Contact** Stuart Nicholson, director of music +353 1 453 9472, [organist@stpatrickscathedral.ie](mailto:organist@stpatrickscathedral.ie)  
[www.stpatrickscathedral.ie](http://www.stpatrickscathedral.ie)  
**Durham Cathedral**  
**Scholarships** c (boys & girls), cs, o  
**Trials** by appointment.  
**Contact** Daniel Cook 0191 386 4766, [music@durhamcathedral.co.uk](mailto:music@durhamcathedral.co.uk)  
[www.durhamcathedral.co.uk](http://www.durhamcathedral.co.uk)  
**Durham University, St Chad's College**  
**Scholarships** cs, o (12 choral scholarships available plus two organ scholarships, each worth £1,000 p.a.)  
**Trials** Auditions in Mar prior to the start of the academic year, and in Oct.

**Contact** Roger Muttitt, director of music, [roger.a.muttitt@durham.ac.uk](mailto:roger.a.muttitt@durham.ac.uk)  
[www.stchads.ac.uk/college/activities/choir](http://www.stchads.ac.uk/college/activities/choir)

**E**  
**Edinburgh, Fettes College**  
**Scholarships** o  
**Contact** Tracy Doig 0131 311 6706  
[www.fettes.com](http://www.fettes.com)  
**Edinburgh, St Mary's Episcopal Cathedral in conjunction with St Mary's Music School, Edinburgh**  
**Scholarships** c (boys & girls 9-13), cs (male & female), o  
**Deadline** none, although (c) early application preferred  
**Auditions** (c) Nov, Feb, May; advisory auditions and trials for younger years all year round.  
**Trials** (cs) all year round, (o) Feb  
**Contact** (c) Mary Walls, admissions secretary, 0131 5387766, [mwalls@st-marys-music-school.co.uk](mailto:mwalls@st-marys-music-school.co.uk); also for younger years 7 to 9 [www.stmarysmusicschool.co.uk/study/choir-school](http://www.stmarysmusicschool.co.uk/study/choir-school)  
 (cs), (o) Duncan Ferguson, [music@cathedral.net](mailto:music@cathedral.net)  
[www.cathedral.net](http://www.cathedral.net)  
**Ely Cathedral, in conjunction with King's School, Ely**  
**Scholarships** c (boys years 3-8; girls years 7-11); sixth form awards (boys and girls years 12-13); o (sixth form)  
**Deadline** applications anytime; formal trials (girls) Jan, (boys) Feb/Mar  
**Contact** (boys) Edmund Aldhouse, [e.alldhouse@elycathedral.org](mailto:e.alldhouse@elycathedral.org) (also for informal pre-trial); (girls and all sixth form) Sarah MacDonald [sarahmacdonald@kingsely.org](mailto:sarahmacdonald@kingsely.org) for informal pre-trial; Admissions staff 01353 660702, [admissions@kings-ely.cambs.sch.uk](mailto:admissions@kings-ely.cambs.sch.uk)  
[www.elycathedral.org](http://www.elycathedral.org)  
[www.kingsely.co.uk](http://www.kingsely.co.uk)



◀ **Exeter Cathedral**

**Scholarships** c (boys and girls), cs (counter-tenors or contraltos, t, b – through Exeter University or gap), o  
**Gap** sometimes (cs)  
**Be a chorister for the day** 28 Nov 2020  
**Deadline** as soon as possible (cs & o)  
**Trials** (c) late Jan; (cs) any time by arrangement  
**Contact** (c) Katharine Pearce 01392 255298, [k.pearce@exetercs.org](mailto:k.pearce@exetercs.org), [www.exetercs.org](http://www.exetercs.org); (cs & o) Timothy Noon 01392 430923 [timothy.noon@exeter-cathedral.org.uk](mailto:timothy.noon@exeter-cathedral.org.uk), [www.exeter-cathedral.org.uk](http://www.exeter-cathedral.org.uk)

**G**

**Glasgow Cathedral (St Mungo's or High)**

**Scholarships** cs (men and women), o  
**Gap** yes (students and postgrads)  
**Deadline** Apply anytime  
**Contact** Andrew Forbes, [andrew.forbes@glasgowcathedral.org](mailto:andrew.forbes@glasgowcathedral.org), [www.glasgowcathedral.org](http://www.glasgowcathedral.org)

**Glasgow, St Bride's Episcopal Church**

**Scholarships** cs (alto, tenor, bass)  
**Gap** yes  
**Deadline** Applications accepted all year-round and trials arranged accordingly.  
**Contact** Rebecca Tavener 07801 239596, [cappella.nova@strath.ac.uk](mailto:cappella.nova@strath.ac.uk), <https://stbridesglasgow.wordpress.com>

**Gloucester Cathedral**

**Scholarships** c (boys 2020; girls and boys 2021)  
**Deadline** Apply anytime  
**Contact** Helen Sims 01452 508212, [helen@gloucestercathedral.org.uk](mailto:helen@gloucestercathedral.org.uk), [www.gloucestercathedral.org.uk](http://www.gloucestercathedral.org.uk)

**Guildford Cathedral**

**Scholarships** c (boys 7-13, girls 9-18), o  
**Deadline** (boys) Oct, (girls) by appointment, (o) please enquire  
**Trials** (boys) Nov, (girls) by appointment, (o) see website  
**Contact** Katherine Dienes-Williams 01483 547866, [katherine@guildford-cathedral.org](mailto:katherine@guildford-cathedral.org), [www.guildford-cathedral.org](http://www.guildford-cathedral.org)

**H**

**Hampton Court Palace, Chapel Royal**

**Scholarships** c (boys), cs, o  
**Contact** Carl Jackson 020 3166 6516, [music@chapelroyal.org](mailto:music@chapelroyal.org), [www.chapelroyal.org](http://www.chapelroyal.org)

**Hampton School**

**Scholarships** cs (in conjunction with the Chapel Royal, Hampton Court Palace)  
**Contact** Iain Donald, director of music 020 8783 4200, [music@hamptonschool.org.uk](mailto:music@hamptonschool.org.uk), [www.hamptonschool.org.uk](http://www.hamptonschool.org.uk)

**Hereford Cathedral**

**Scholarships** c (boys), cs (a, t, b – one of each, lasting 1 year), o (annual)

**Gap** yes

**Deadline** none; enquire anytime  
**Contact** Geraint Bowen 01432 374238, [organist@herefordcathedral.org](mailto:organist@herefordcathedral.org), [www.herefordcathedral.org](http://www.herefordcathedral.org)

**Hexham Abbey**

**Scholarships** c, o (scholarships for sixth-formers from the locality)  
**Deadline** enquiries always welcome  
**Contact** Michael Haynes 01434 602031, [directorofmusic@hexhamabbey.org.uk](mailto:directorofmusic@hexhamabbey.org.uk), [www.hexhamabbey.org.uk](http://www.hexhamabbey.org.uk)



▲ Aaron Hawthorne is the new organ scholar at Glasgow Cathedral

**L**

**Lancing College**

**Scholarships** cs (boys & girls age 13+/year 9), o (16+/year 12)  
**Deadline** mid-Dec before year of entry  
**Contact** Mrs Sarah Linfield, 01273 465805, [admissions@lancing.org.uk](mailto:admissions@lancing.org.uk), [www.lancingcollege.co.uk](http://www.lancingcollege.co.uk)

**Leeds (RC) Cathedral / Leeds University / Huddersfield University / Leeds College of Music**

**Scholarships** cs (men & women, all voice parts), o. Also available: schools choral scholarships, and choral conducting scholarships  
**Deadline** none, but early in the year is advisable

**Trials** on application

**Contact** (cs) Jessica Shears, Diocese of Leeds Music Office [office@dioceseofleedsmusic.org.uk](mailto:office@dioceseofleedsmusic.org.uk); (o) Benjamin Saunders 0113 244 8634 [www.dioceseofleedsmusic.org.uk](mailto:www.dioceseofleedsmusic.org.uk)

**Leeds Parish Church / Leeds University / Leeds College of Music**

**Scholarships** c, o  
**Contact** Simon Lindley 0113 255 6143, (mob) 07860 293591, [choir@leedsparishchurch.com](mailto:choir@leedsparishchurch.com), [www.leedsparishchurch.org.uk](http://www.leedsparishchurch.org.uk)

**Leicester Cathedral**

**Scholarships** cs (men & women), c (boys & girls)  
**Contact** Christopher Ouvre-Johns 0116 261 5374, [chris.ouvre-johns@leccofe.org](mailto:chris.ouvre-johns@leccofe.org), <http://leicestercathedral.org>

**Lichfield Cathedral**

**Scholarships** c (boys and girls), cs (sixth form; alto, tenor, bass)  
**Contact** Sandra Slater, registrar at the Cathedral School, 01543 306168, [s.slater@lichfieldcathedralschool.com](mailto:s.slater@lichfieldcathedralschool.com), [www.lichfield-cathedral.org](http://www.lichfield-cathedral.org), [www.lichfieldcathedralschool.com](http://www.lichfieldcathedralschool.com)

**Liverpool Anglican Cathedral**

**Scholarships** cs (men & women) (£3,500 pa + free accommodation in Cathedral Close), o (£5,000 pa + accommodation)  
**Deadline** please enquire  
**Contact** Lee Ward, director of music, 0151 702 7291, [lee.ward@liverpoolcathedral.org.uk](mailto:lee.ward@liverpoolcathedral.org.uk), [www.liverpoolcathedral.org.uk](http://www.liverpoolcathedral.org.uk)

**Liverpool Metropolitan Cathedral**

**Scholarships** c (boys & girls), cs, o  
**Contact** Jacqueline Larrosa, 07775615589, [j.larrosa@metcathedral.org.uk](mailto:j.larrosa@metcathedral.org.uk), [www.liverpoolmetrocathedral.org.uk](http://www.liverpoolmetrocathedral.org.uk)

**Llandaff Cathedral**

**Scholarships** c  
**Contact** Richard Moorhouse 029 2057 5218, [rm1971@btinternet.com](mailto:rm1971@btinternet.com), [www.llandaffcathedral.org.uk](http://www.llandaffcathedral.org.uk)

**London, All Saints Church, Fulham**

**Scholarships** cs, o  
**Contact** Organist and director of music, Jonathan Wikeley 07966 969746, [jonathanwikeley@gmail.com](mailto:jonathanwikeley@gmail.com) (contact anytime for further information)  
[www.allsaints-fulham.org.uk](http://www.allsaints-fulham.org.uk)

**London, Dulwich College**

**Scholarships** c (boys), cs, o  
**Contact** Mrs Elsa Tatevossian [tatevossiane@dulwich.org.uk](mailto:tatevossiane@dulwich.org.uk), [www.dulwich.org.uk](http://www.dulwich.org.uk)

**London, Royal Hospital, Chelsea**

**Scholarships** The Royal Hospital Organ Scholarship (£4,250 bursary and accommodation at low rent, age 18-27)  
**Contact** William Vann, organist and director of music, 020 7881 5249, [will.vann@chelsea-pensioners.org.uk](mailto:will.vann@chelsea-pensioners.org.uk), [www.chelsea-pensioners.org.uk](http://www.chelsea-pensioners.org.uk)

**London, St George's (RC) Cathedral, Southwark**

**Scholarships** c (boys & girls)  
**Deadline** End of April.  
**Trials** Annual auditions for boys & girls take place during May.

**Contact** Norman Harper, director of music, 020 7928 5256, [music@stgeorges.org.uk](mailto:music@stgeorges.org.uk), [www.southwark-rc-cathedral.org.uk](http://www.southwark-rc-cathedral.org.uk)

**London, St Martin-in-the-Fields**

**Scholarships** cs (SATB), o  
**Deadline** please enquire  
**Contact** Cathy Martin 020 7766 1108, [choirs@smift.org](mailto:choirs@smift.org), [www.stmartin-in-the-fields.org](http://www.stmartin-in-the-fields.org)

**London, St Mary's Battersea**

**Scholarships** cs (SATB), o  
**Contact** Tyrone Whiting [tyrone.whiting@googlemail.com](mailto:tyrone.whiting@googlemail.com), [www.stmarysbattersea.org.uk](http://www.stmarysbattersea.org.uk)

**London, St Paul's Cathedral**

**Scholarships** c (boys), o  
**Chorister experience day** and **Open day** 13 Oct 2020  
**Deadline** (c) enquiries welcome throughout the year, (o) see website  
**Contact** (c) Angela Palotai, 020 7236 6883, [apalotai@stpaulscathedral.org.uk](mailto:apalotai@stpaulscathedral.org.uk), [www.stpauls.co.uk](http://www.stpauls.co.uk)

**London, St Paul's Cathedral School**

**Scholarships** c (boys)  
**Open day** 13 Oct 2020  
**Gap** yes  
**Contact** Clare Morgan 020 7248 5156, [admissions@spcs.london.sch.uk](mailto:admissions@spcs.london.sch.uk), [www.spcslondon.com](http://www.spcslondon.com)

**London, Southwark Cathedral**

**Scholarships** cs, o  
**Contact** Ian Keatley 020 7367 6703, [susanna.bloomfield@southwark.anglican.org](mailto:susanna.bloomfield@southwark.anglican.org), [www.southwark.anglican.org](http://www.southwark.anglican.org)

**London, Temple Church**

**Scholarships** c (boys)  
**Deadline** none  
**Trials** throughout the year  
**Contact** Liz Clarke 020 7427 5650, [liz@templechurch.com](mailto:liz@templechurch.com), [www.templechurch.com](http://www.templechurch.com)

**London University, King's College London**

**Scholarships** cs (men & women), o  
**Contact** Joseph Fort, 020 7848 2333, [choir@kcl.ac.uk](mailto:choir@kcl.ac.uk), [www.kcl.ac.uk/choir](http://www.kcl.ac.uk/choir)

**London University, Royal Holloway**

**Scholarships** cs (men & women), o  
**Contact** Rupert Gough 01784 414970, [choraladmin@rhul.ac.uk](mailto:choraladmin@rhul.ac.uk), [www.chapelchoir.co.uk](http://www.chapelchoir.co.uk)

**London, Trinity Laban Conservatoire of Music and Dance**

**Scholarships** cs (12 Trinity College London choral scholarships p.a., for male and female undergrad. and postgrad. students)

**Contact** Ralph Allwood,

[r.allwood@trinitylaban.ac.uk](mailto:r.allwood@trinitylaban.ac.uk)

**London, University of Greenwich**

**Scholarships** c (David Fussey Choral Exhibition, available to any student already enrolled on a full-time course at the University of Greenwich)

**Deadline** 30 Sep each year

**Contact** Chris Shelley, director of student and academic services, 020 8331 8905, [c.j.shelley@greenwich.ac.uk](mailto:c.j.shelley@greenwich.ac.uk), [www.greenwich.ac.uk/choir](http://www.greenwich.ac.uk/choir)

**London, Westminster Abbey**

**Scholarships** c (boys only, incl. school bursaries)

**Chorister experience days**

10 Oct 2020, 13 Mar 2021

**Deadline** enquiries welcome throughout the year

**Contact** (c) 020 7654 4981, [music@westminster-abbey.org](mailto:music@westminster-abbey.org), [choirschool@westminster-abbey.org](http://choirschool@westminster-abbey.org), [www.abbeychoirschool.org](http://www.abbeychoirschool.org)

**London, Westminster Cathedral**

**Scholarships** c (boys 8-13), o

**Open day** please enquire

**Contact** Lucy Augar, registrar, choir school 020 7798 9081, [lauger@choirschool.com](mailto:lauger@choirschool.com), [www.westminstercathedralchoir.com](http://www.westminstercathedralchoir.com)

**M**

**Manchester Cathedral**

**Scholarships** c (boys & girls), o

**Deadline** none

**Voice trials** by arrangement with the director of music

**Contact** Christopher Stokes 0161 833 2220, [www.manchestercathedral.org](http://www.manchestercathedral.org)

**N**

**Newcastle, Cathedral Church of St Nicholas**

**Scholarships** c (in partnership with Newcastle School for Boys, Gosforth, for boys entering Years 3 to 8); cs (men and women a, t, b in full-time education, from

£2,012 pa + fees and free singing tuition; four services per week); o  
**Contact** Michael Stoddart 0191 232 1939, directorofmusic@stnicnewcastle.co.uk, michael.stoddart@stnicholascathedralmusic.co.uk  
**Norwich Cathedral Scholarships** c, cs  
**Contact** Tracy Bigwood 01603 218 306, liturgyandmusicpa@cathedral.org.uk  
**Nottingham, St Mary the Virgin Scholarships** cs, o  
**Contact** John Keys, director of music, scholarships@stmaryschoirnottingham.com  
[www.stmaryschoirnottingham.com](http://www.stmaryschoirnottingham.com)

**Oxford, St Edward's School Scholarships** Music scholarship (13+ and 16+)  
**Open days** 2 main open days and a regular mini-open day per term  
**Contact** Registrar Nicola Jones 01865 319200, director of music Alex Tester, testera@stedwardschool.org  
[www.stedwardschool.org](http://www.stedwardschool.org)  
**Oxford University Scholarships** c  
**Contact** Owen Rees 01865 279173  
[www.admissions.ox.ac.uk/orgscholars](http://www.admissions.ox.ac.uk/orgscholars)  
**Oxford, Magdalen College Scholarships** c (boys 7-12 yrs, held at Magdalen College School), cs (undergrad), o (2 for undergrads)  
**Gap** enquire  
**Deadline** early September  
**Contact** 01865 286701, choir@magd.ox.ac.uk  
[www.magdalencollegechoir.com](http://www.magdalencollegechoir.com)

**Portsmouth Cathedral Scholarships** c (boys 7-14 and girls 11-18), cs (c-t, t, b), o  
**Gap** yes (or while studying at the Universities of Portsmouth, Chichester or Southampton)  
**Deadline** (c) Oct each year, (cs, o) Oct & Feb each year  
**Trials** (c) by appointment, (cs, o) Nov & Mar each year  
**Contact** Dr David Price 023 9282 3300 ext. 225, music@portsmouthcathedral.org.uk  
[www.portsmouthcathedral.org.uk](http://www.portsmouthcathedral.org.uk)

**Radley College Scholarships** c (boys, yrs 2-8; music scholarships yr 9), o (yr 12)  
**Deadline** (c) anytime; (music scholarships, o) Jan 2021  
**Trials** (c) termly  
**Contact** Sam Gladstone 01235 543034, musicadmin@radley.org.uk  
[www.radley.org.uk](http://www.radley.org.uk)  
**Ripon Cathedral Scholarships** c (boys & girls)  
**Deadlines** none; enquire anytime  
**Trials** By appointment at any time  
**Contact** 01765 603496, singing@riponcathedral.org.uk  
[www.riponcathedral.org.uk](http://www.riponcathedral.org.uk)  
**Rugby School Scholarships** cs (13+), o (16+)  
**Contact** Richard Tanner, director of music, 01788 556207, music@rugbyschool.net  
[www.rugbyschool.net](http://www.rugbyschool.net)

**St Albans Cathedral Scholarships** o  
**Gap** yes – pre-university, undergrads and postgrads considered (bursary and fees of c.£14-15,000 pa and rent-free accommodation (s/c 1-bed flat)).  
**Contact** Lizzie Smyth 01727 890245, music@stalbanscathedral.org  
[www.stalbanscathedral.org](http://www.stalbanscathedral.org)  
**St Andrews University Scholarships** cs (men & women), o  
**Trials** by appointment  
**Contact** Chris Bragg 01334 462226, cjb30@st-andrews.ac.uk  
[www.stsalvatorschapelchoir.co.uk](http://www.stsalvatorschapelchoir.co.uk)  
**St Davids Cathedral Scholarships** cs, o  
**Gap** undergrads & postgrads  
**Contact** Oliver Waterer 01437 720128, stdavidsmusic@gmail.com  
[www.stdavidscathedral.org.uk](http://www.stdavidscathedral.org.uk)  
**St Edmundsbury Cathedral Scholarships** c (boys), cs (sixth formers, male c-t, t, b), o  
**Gap** yes (but no accommodation)  
**Open days** none; get in touch to organise visit  
**Deadline** none; enquire anytime  
**Trials** By appointment  
**Contact** Richard Cook 01284 748737, adom@stedscathedral.org  
[www.stedscathedral.co.uk](http://www.stedscathedral.co.uk)  
**Salford, St John's (RC) Cathedral Scholarships** cs (men & women)  
**Deadline** none  
**Contact** Martin Barry 0161 443 4104  
[www.salforddiocese.org.uk/music/cathedral-choir](http://www.salforddiocese.org.uk/music/cathedral-choir)  
**Salisbury Cathedral Scholarships** c (boys & girls), o  
**Deadline** please enquire  
**Trials** see website  
**Be a chorister for the day** Oct  
**Voice trials workshop** 7 Nov 2020  
**Voice trials** Jan & Feb  
**Deadline** please enquire  
**Informal pre-audition** Director of

music David Halls, and assistant director of music John Challenger, are also able to offer an informal 'pre-audition'.  
**Contact** (c, o) David Halls 01722 555125, d.halls@salcath.co.uk; (c) Kathy Davies 07979 378926, chorister.recruitment@salcath.co.uk  
[bit.ly/1TJczdc](mailto:bit.ly/1TJczdc), [bit.ly/32oNTC9](mailto:bit.ly/32oNTC9)  
**Shrewsbury School Scholarships** c (boys & girls), o  
**Contact** Stephen Williams 01743 280580, chapelchoir@shrewsbury.org.uk  
[www.shrewsbury.org.uk](http://www.shrewsbury.org.uk)  
**Southwell Cathedral Scholarships** o  
**Contact** Paul Provost 01636 817297, rectorchori@southwellminster.org.uk  
[www.southwellminster.org.uk](http://www.southwellminster.org.uk)  
**Stowe School Scholarships** Music scholarship (ages 13 & 16)  
**Contact** Admissions 01280 818323  
[www.stowe.co.uk](http://www.stowe.co.uk)

**Tewkesbury Abbey Scholarships** c (boys), cs (men), o  
**Contact** Simon Bell 01242 258000, sabell@deanclose.org.uk  
[www.scholacantorum.org.uk](http://www.scholacantorum.org.uk)  
**Truro Cathedral Scholarships** c (boys & girls), cs (a, t, b), o  
**Deadline** as soon as possible  
**Contact** Director of music 01872 276782, christophergray@trurocathedral.org.uk  
[www.trurocathedral.org.uk](http://www.trurocathedral.org.uk)

**Wakefield Cathedral Scholarships** c (boys & girls)  
**Recruitment & trials** Tests take place at any time of year, but the main recruitment time is May/June to Sep  
**Contact** Thomas Moore 01924 373923, thomasmoores70@gmail.com  
[www.wakefieldcathedral.org.uk](http://www.wakefieldcathedral.org.uk)

**Warwick, St Mary's Collegiate Church Scholarships** c (boys attending Warwick Junior and Senior Schools), o  
**Deadline** 31 Dec  
**Trials** Jan, but the director of music is available to hear potential choristers all year round.  
**Contact** Oliver Hancock 01926 403940, musicadmin@stmaryswarwick.org.uk  
[www.stmaryswarwick.org.uk](http://www.stmaryswarwick.org.uk)  
[www.warwickschool.org.uk](http://www.warwickschool.org.uk)  
**Wells Cathedral Scholarships** cs (men), c (boys & girls), o  
**Trials** ongoing  
**Contact** music office 01749 674483  
[www.wells cathedral.org.uk](http://www.wells cathedral.org.uk)  
**Winchester Cathedral Scholarships** c (boys & girls)  
**Voice trials workshop** (boys) Jan  
**Trials** (boys) by appointment  
**Auditions** (girls) Mar  
**Contact** Choirs administrator 01962 857219, choirs@winchester-cathedral.org.uk; Ali Dugdale, The Pilgrims' School 01962 854189, admissions@pilgrims-school.co.uk  
[www.winchester-cathedral.org.uk](http://www.winchester-cathedral.org.uk), [www.thepilgrims-school.co.uk](http://www.thepilgrims-school.co.uk)  
**Winchester College Scholarships** c, o  
**Contact** Malcolm Archer or Ali Dugdale at 'The Pilgrims' School (for Quirister places only) 01962 854189, admissions@pilgrims-school.co.uk  
[www.winchestercollege.org](http://www.winchestercollege.org)  
**Winchester, Pilgrims' School** see Winchester Cathedral (above)  
**Windsor Castle, St George's Chapel Scholarships** c (boys, age 7-9), o  
**Contact** (o) Chapter Office 01753 848888, chapteroffice@stgeorges-windsor.org; (c) Music administrator 01753 848797, music@stgeorges-windsor.org  
[www.stgeorges-windsor.org](http://www.stgeorges-windsor.org)  
**Worcester Cathedral Scholarships** c (boys & girls), cs (A, T, B), o  
**Gap** cs, o (pre- & post-university)  
**Be a chorister for an afternoon** (boys) 22 Nov 2020 & 7 Mar 2021; (girls) 23 Jan 2021  
**Deadline** choral and organ scholarships are advertised in Nov; closing date will be advised in the application pack. Choristers (boys & girls): please direct enquiries to Samuel Hudson at any time.  
**Contact** Samuel Hudson, director of music, 01905 732916, samuelhudson@worcestercathedral.org.uk  
[www.worcestercathedral.co.uk](http://www.worcestercathedral.co.uk)  
**Wycliffe College Scholarships** c (boys & girls), cs (boys & girls)  
**Deadline** please enquire  
**Contact** Fiona Lawson-Best 01453 820412, fiona.lawson-best@wycliffe.co.uk  
[www.wycliffe.co.uk](http://www.wycliffe.co.uk)

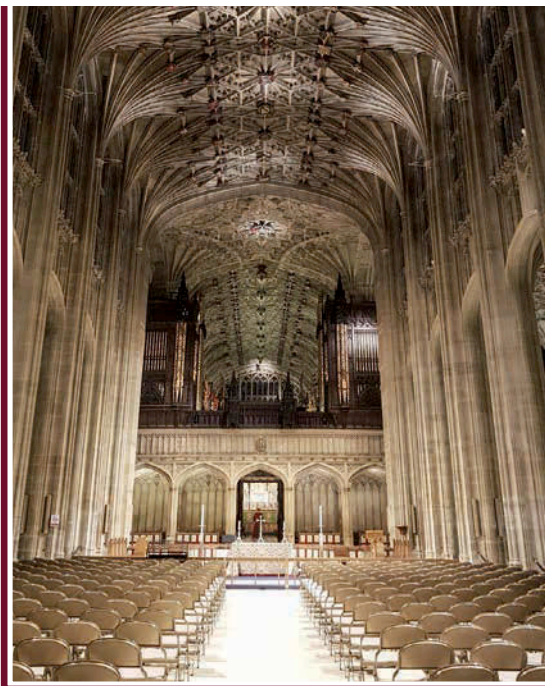
**York Minster Scholarships** c (boys & girls, at Minster School), cs (a, t, b, normally with York Univ.)  
**Gap** in special circumstances  
**Deadline** enquire any time  
**Trials** as advertised  
**Contact** Robert Sharpe, director of music, music@yorkminster.org  
[www.yorkminster.org](http://www.yorkminster.org)

▼ Music scholar at St Edward's School, Oxford



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# Performance review

Andrés Cea Galán explains how to perform the organ music of Correa de Arauxo, with or without divided stops

## part 7 Correa de Arauxo: Tiento no.36, from *Facultad Orgánica*

Francisco Correa de Arauxo (1584-1654) was a contemporary of Sweelinck, Titelouze, Scheidt, Frescobaldi, Gibbons and Bull. In his *Facultad orgánica*, published in 1626, Correa made references to the *Obras de música* by Antonio de Cabezón, to Rodrigues Coelho's *Flores de música* and to the works, unfortunately lost, by the musicians Peraza and Pradillo. There are also references to the treatises by Salinas, Montanos and Cerone, as well as to the music of Josquin, Gombert and Morales. It

is known that Correa maintained personal and professional relations with Guerrero, Cotes and Lobo, each of whom served as *maestro de capilla* at the cathedral of Seville during that period. Seville, where Correa was born and lived until 1636, was at the time a powerful economic centre (due to commerce with America) as well as an important centre for artistic and literary creation, with a significant proportion of international residents. Curiously, Correa's competitor for the position of organist at the church of San Salvador in 1599 was

the English musician John Pickford, active as an organist in the city. However, the circumstances of Correa's career alone cannot explain the extreme quality, beauty, richness, variety and emotion that makes his music so characteristic and impressive.

In his *Facultad orgánica*, Correa collected 69 pieces with a clearly pedagogical intention. The author himself offers us an index of the pieces divided into five different levels of difficulty, although the collection doesn't contain any material for beginners. >

▼ Segovia Cathedral, where Correa de Arauxo was prebendary from 1640 till his death



OSCAR IBÁÑEZ FERNÁNDEZ



◀ Correa printed his music using the system of tablature with numbers (*cifra*) in use in Spain since the mid-16th century. In the preface to his edition (*Prólogo en alabanza de la cifra / Preface in praise of the tablature*) he praises the virtues of this notational system, which continued to be used until the mid-18th century, as evidenced by the sources preserved in Spain, Portugal and South America.

Correa's edition contains an important introductory text (*Advertencias*) in which he offers comments on different aspects of modality, consonance and dissonance, tempo and proportion, fingering and ornamentation. In addition, each piece is preceded by a short commentary (*Prologuillos*) which, in several instances, gives the player precise instructions about character and tempo, or registration. Correa also introduces a system of 'indications by hand' (*manezillas*); literally little hands

pointing to specific passages in the music which Correa intended to discuss in a book devoted to composition, unfortunately lost.

One of Correa's main contributions in his book is the development of a complete system of time signatures (binary, ternary and quinary), in order to indicate different divisions and velocities of the bar. The precedents to this system can be found in Cabezón's book as well as in the music of the vihuela players Narváez, Mudarra and Valderrabano. Correa's tablature also made it easier to represent diminutions both in ordinary (3-, 6-, 9- and 12-note figures) and extraordinary proportions (5-, 7-, 10-, 14-, 15-, 18-, 24- and 32-note figures).

Almost all the pieces are entitled *tiento*, the common Spanish designation for keyboard pieces during the 16th and 17th centuries, following the system of the 12 modes. In addition, Correa includes two liturgical works (*Lauda Sion* and *Todo el mundo en general*), two variations sets or *diferencias* (the first based on *Guárdame las vacas* and the second on the cantus firmus of the song *Dexaldos mi madre*) as well as two intabulations (*Gaybergier* by Crecquillon and *Susanne un jour* by Orlando di Lasso).

More than half of the pieces in the collection were composed for the *medio registro* (divided stop), an absolute novelty in the context of Correa's time. In these pieces, one of the hands acts as a soloist (*medio registro de tiple* for the right hand or *medio registro de baxón* for the left), playing diminutions and ornaments, while the other hand plays an accompaniment in three voices. This form of composition is already described with total accuracy in 1584, in a document emanating from the circle of organist Francisco de Peraza; one of Correa's teachers in Seville, and probably the inventor of this way of playing.

The realisation of those compositions is intimately related to the development of the divided stops (*registro partido*) in the Spanish organ from the last third of the 16th century onwards. Thanks to the division of the stops into bass and treble (between c1 and c#1) it is possible to play with two different colours on a single manual, enhancing the contrast between solo and accompaniment. The divided stop would become one of the main characteristics of the Spanish organ during the 17th, 18th and even 19th centuries.

Tiento 36 'de medio registro de tiple' may have been composed around 1599; Correa himself states that the piece 'is from my beginnings'. The work's *Prologuillo*s, in full, reads as follows:

*Tiento* for divided stop with solo in the right hand [*tiple*], in the tenth mode or in the high first mode, that is, with an irregular ending on the A of *Delasolre*, in the semichromatic genus [i.e. with a flat in the key]. In some passages of the pieces (and particularly in this one in bar 80), where there is a dotted quaver which, by necessity, has to be followed by a semiquaver, I prefer not to indicate it [in the tablature] for the aforementioned reason [i.e. it has to be a semiquaver by necessity] and in order not to overburden this work with rhythmical figures. This *tiento*, although being of sixteen notes [per bar], is easy for students of the second level, and is from my beginnings.

Despite its almost free and improvisatory character, this repertoire never forgets the most refined imitative and contrapuntal procedures. In the case of Tiento 36, as in other works from his first period, Correa seems to make reference to the beginning of a motet by Cristóbal de Morales, *Sancta et immaculata virginitas*, later used by Francisco Guerrero in one of his Masses.

The time signature (C) indicates that it is necessary to play 'slowly' (*despacio*). Elsewhere, Correa insists that the player must start such pieces 'with gravity' (*con gravedad*). Furthermore, it is important to observe the notational progression in the composition: from the whole notes and minims at the beginning until the arrival of the diminution in semiquavers in the right hand [Ex.1]. The tempo must remain consistent with the opening. Indeed, the diminutions require complete fluidity and even a very slight and progressive acceleration leading into the cadences. When the solo voice stops, the impression of deceleration must be evident in the accompaniment, before the same process begins again.

In order to achieve the effect of fluidity in the diminutions, it is essential to use the proper fingering. Correa himself offers instructions on this matter in his preface, but it is important to remember that the Spanish fingering from the 16th and 17th centuries was much more 'modern' than those used

#### ▼ Facsimile of first edition of Tiento no. 36 (1626)



#### ▼ Correa's 'manezillas'; the little hand indicated specific compositional elements Correa intended to discuss in his treatise, now lost



▼ Ex.1: The first page illustrates the gradual progression in note values until the right hand solo enters in bar 18

▼ Ex.2: Redouble, the first part of which is notated and occurs before the beat

▼ Ex.3: On organs without divided keyboards, the alto line sometimes has to be played by the thumb of the right hand, or by the pedal

by other European organ schools. As early as 1565, Tomás de Santamaría in his *Arte de tañer fantasia* considered using groups of three, four or even five fingers to play the diminutions.

A characteristic (and controversial) element in Correa's music is the *ayrecillo* (literally, 'little air'). This term refers to a kind of *inégalité*, described by Correa in different parts of his book and confirmed by other sources. It affects specifically the sections in *sesquialtera* or *proportio minor* (bars 56-64, 85-87 and 92-94 in this case). Essentially, and greatly simplifying the problem, what Correa describes is a slight accentuation and prolongation of the first note of each triplet, but other solutions are possible too, according to the musical context.

Apart from a small number of written-out ornaments (such as those in bars 3, 11, 15, 50 and 66), very few trills are indicated in the original manuscript. For those that are, Correa uses an 'R', short for *redouble*. The beginning of the ornament (notated) is to be played *before* the beat (as can be seen in bars 55, 90 [Ex.2] and 100). Nevertheless, Correa suggests playing an ornament (trill or mordent) on each minim beat. Evidently, this is not always possible due to the presence of diminutions or because of fingering.

Even so, a simple calculation can suggest a desirable quantity of ornaments for each piece. The reconstruction of those ornaments constitutes, without doubt, one of the most significant challenges of this repertoire.

Regarding registration, this kind of piece is often played today with the cornet in the right hand providing the solo. Even if this possibility is perfectly pleasant, it is important to be aware that the cornet stop did not exist in the south of Spain during Correa's lifetime: registration sources preserved at Seville Cathedral, dating from 1584-86, are very precise in this regard. The accompaniment should be played on flues 8, 8, 4 (similar to a French *fond d'orgue*), while the solo is played with the same foundations plus a reed stop (trumpet or dolcian), sometimes reinforced with a high-pitched mutation or flute (2ft, for example). Another possibility was to play the solo with a mixture in the right hand. The important detail revealed by those sources, however, is the compulsory use of the tremulant. In this manner, the result, in colour and character, is much more closely aligned to a French *écrit de cromorne* than a *écrit de cornet* and fits better with the idea of imitating the human voice described by other sources.

In several passages (such as bars 40, 59, 99 and 100 of Tiento 36) we find big stretches

in the left hand, intended to be played on keyboards with short octaves. When using a keyboard with a fully chromatic bass octave, the lower notes can be played on the pedal, coupled to the manual.

When playing on an organ without divided stops, it is possible to play this repertoire on two manuals with different registrations. However, when this is the case, one has to be aware that the right hand thumb may, on occasion, also have to play the highest note of the accompaniment, as in bars 54-56 [Ex.3] and 101-103. In this instance, the most practical solution is to play those notes in the pedal, using the right foot.

Correa's *Facultad orgánica* constitutes an important musical and theoretical legacy in the musical landscape of his time, with its undeniable technical and artistic qualities. Tiento 36, although a youthful composition, already contains many of the basic elements of his style. For this reason, I consider it an excellent way to enter the sensitive and beautiful musical universe of this great Spanish composer. ■

*Andrés Cea Galán is an organist, musicologist and recording artist specialising in the keyboard music of Spain. He is the founder of the Instituto del Órgano Hispano.*





▲ Cappella Artemisia, who specialise in historic convent music, plan a series of performances and recordings in September to celebrate the life and work of Isabella Leonarda

COURTESY CAPPELLA ARTEMISIA

# ‘Skilled in song’

Life in a convent gave Isabella Leonarda the opportunity to teach music and write 200 works. **Rebecca Tavener** remembers the 17th-century composer in her 400th anniversary year

‘Get thee to a nunnery!’ was a very masculine type of dismissive insult from doomed Hamlet to his equally doomed love, Ophelia. Men might, of course, consider that to be ‘a fate worse than death’, but let’s turn this idea on its head and think about the difference between an aristocratic girl in the early 17th century becoming the property of a husband chosen by her parents, subject to his whim and to the high mortality rate of childbirth, and her sister taking the veil, protected from most of the dangers of the world, educated to a much higher standard than the average female and, in many cases, enjoying longevity and respect in a calm, secure and beautiful setting. In 1620 one such was born in Novara, the daughter of a noble lawyer, Count Giannantonio Leonardi, and his wife

Apollonia, who consigned many of their children to the life of religion (leaving the estate and title to the second son) including, at the age of 16, their daughter Isabella, who entered the Collegio di Sant’Orsola in 1636, the Ursuline convent where she was to spend the rest of her remarkably long life. Anna Isabella Leonardi (1620-1704), to use her full name, changed her final vowel to an ‘a’ and became known both in religion and to posterity as Isabella Leonarda.

Besides her longevity, this is where we find another pleasing connection with a composing nun of earlier times, St Hildegard of Bingen, who was devoted to St Ursula. The improbable – but deeply inspiring to young females of a religious persuasion – legend tells of Ursula, a British princess commanded by her father to marry a pagan. Having

refused, she stomped off on pilgrimage to Rome with an entourage of 11,000 (probably 11, multiplied by scribal error) virgins who were all martyred with her outside Cologne as they returned from seeing the Pope by a circuitous route up the Rhine. St Ursula’s faith and dynamism inspired the Ursuline order, and the best-known convent dates from 1535, founded at Brescia for the education of girls and the care of the sick and needy. Was this Novarese Ursuline nunnery a wealthy foundation? By contrast with poor convents, helping the sick and the poor with more than they could spare from their own grinding poverty, Sant’Orsola was well-endowed and prestigious. (Unfortunately, however, for those who like to travel in the footsteps of composers, there is nothing left of their grand establishment today.) Leonarda’s parents

were generous donors, the school attracted the daughters of the local nobility, and the nuns were particularly noted for the lavish celebration in their church of feasts such as those of St Ursula and St Philip Neri.

In 1638, the year before her final vows, the convent was inspected by ecclesiastical authorities who reported that Isabella was able to sing, write, compute, and compose music. While this musical education was unavailable to the normal run of women, for nuns and noblewomen the study of music was deemed desirable and their accomplishments admired. In 1658 there were 15 nuns and Leonarda is listed as a music instructor. A report describes her sisters' musical capabilities in the singing of polyphony with eleven rated 'excellent', one 'laudable', and two 'tolerable'. Isabella was described as being 'skilled in plain or figured song'. There is also a description of Elizabeth Casata, organist and mistress of the novices, who was received into the convent with an abnormally small dowry on condition that she played in church and taught music. It may be that she taught Isabella along with her kinsman, Gaspari Casati, *maestro di cappella* of Novara Cathedral from 1635-41, who included two of Leonarda's works in his 1640 volume *Terzo libro de sacri concerti*. All the rest of her c.200 compositions were not published until after she was 50 years of age (1670), and appeared over 30 years until 1700, four years before her death at the age of 84.

Leonarda held numerous roles and was at various times 'counsellor' – an honorary title in old age? – and Mother Superior of her convent. According to her own journal, she only composed in those times allotted by the rule of her order for rest, so creating music was not considered by the order or her sisters to be her 'job' – she worked and sang the office like all the others and did not neglect those duties. Lazaro Agostino Cotta dubbed her 'la musa Novarese' in a directory of prominent citizens:

There shines with glorious fame the name of Isabella Leonarda, who because of the singular esteem in which she is held in the art of music might call herself the Novarese Muse par excellence. For in her are combined rare invention, universal genius ... and all that which one desires in the perfection of the arts.

Novara's position in Piemonte in the north of Italy meant that it was on important trade routes as well as being vulnerable to political, occasionally bellicose, activity in the world at large. Cotta and other Novarese luminaries used everything available to curry favour from on high – hence, no doubt, his printing of a sonnet by A. Saminati Lucchese, comparing Leonarda's musical talents to the military prowess of Emperor Leopold I, victor over the Ottoman Turks who threatened Vienna.

Leopold in war and Leonarda in peace  
Are wondrous: he like Mars, she like Apollo:  
With sword in hand and with the lyres on the  
shoulder  
One vanquishes envy, the other, Thrace.

Leonarda's nephew, Nicola Leonardi, also composed a dedicatory sonnet to Leopold I which was printed in the frontispiece of her *Motetti a voce sola* (op.12, 1686). History does not record how the Holy Roman Emperor might have reacted to being compared with an obscure Italian nun or, indeed, if he ever received the volume of her works dedicated to him. Leonarda always made joint dedications, both to the Virgin Mary and a religious or secular person of influence – the nun Paola Beatrice Odescalchi, for example, niece of Pope Innocent XI. That her music was not

supported with unlimited funds, however, is evinced by the first edition of her op.16 sonatas, set cheaply in movable type. While musical engraving had been around for a century by this time, funds were not extended by the convent for this expensive operation.

Approximately 200 works make her the most productive (in terms of surviving material) of all nun composers currently known. She has her place in music history as the 1693 publication of her op.16 instrumental sonatas, published in Bologna and almost certainly written when she younger, contains the first sonatas by a female composer. That her memory survives at all may be due to some of her music reaching France: Sébastien de Brossard, writing in 1724, praised her thus: 'All of the works of this illustrious and incomparable composer are so beautiful, so gracious, so brilliant and at the same time so knowledgeable and so wise, that my regret is in not having them all.' There is even an unprovable but tantalising story that one of her Mass settings was studied by Beethoven.

A most intriguing question about her SATB choral music is, how was it performed by the nuns? There is no evidence to support the idea that she was writing for the (male) cathedral choir rather than Sant'Orsola. Female singers with very low voices were far from uncommon and in 1625 two convents in Novara contained nuns who sang tenor. ➤

## Publications

*Isabella Leonarda: Selected Compositions*, (Stewart Carter, ed.), Recent Researches in the Music of the Baroque Era vol.59

Scores free to download are available from: IMSLIP (International Music Score Library Project)

CPDL (Choral Public Domain Library). The usual caveat about errors, deliberate or otherwise, should apply to CPDL scores and readers are advised to examine them with care.

## Recordings

There are very few Leonarda recordings currently available. The Italian early music label Tactus (among others) has released the odd track featuring choral works by Leonarda

as part of various anthologies. Readers may wish to explore their catalogue. They have released only one CD dedicated entirely to her: *Vespro a cappella della Beata Vergine* performed by Nova Ars Cantandi [TC 623702].

Cappella Artemisia plan performances and recordings in September 2020; they say 'Covid-19 permitting.' You can join the 'virtual choir' for one of her works, however – details can be found on their website: [www.cappella-artemisia.com](http://www.cappella-artemisia.com).

Some of Leonarda's works, including her *Magnificat*, *Dixit Dominus*, *Salve Regina* and her most celebrated instrumental work, the *Sonata Duodecima*, may be found in live recordings by a range of amateur and professional ensembles on YouTube.





▲ Novara Cathedral. Isabella Leonarda was born in Novara, northern Italy, and her kinsman Gaspari Casati, *maestro di cappella* of Novara Cathedral from 1635–41, included two of Leonarda's works in his 1640 volume *Terzo libro de sacri concerti*



▲ *Sonata Duodecima*, Isabella Leonarda's best-known instrumental composition

theorbo or violone occasionally and her four Mass settings (Kyrie, Gloria, Credo only) include parts for two violins; and we might presume that Leonarda's spiritual sisters also played those instruments.

It is her solo vocal works that are most idiomatic, with very emotional sacred texts: declamatory, intensely fragrant and florid with religious mysticism. Did she write those texts? Again, a comparison with St Hildegard seems inevitable in respect of her almost sensuous exploration of the inner spiritual life. There's also a relationship here with the new musical aesthetic in which opera was taking its first steps, and it has been suggested that the works (presumably sacred) of Giacomo Carissimi were an important influence. Her harmonic language is far from pedestrian with occasional use of Neapolitan 6ths, augmented 6ths and diminished 7ths. Textual understanding is of paramount importance for the performer and there are almost coloratura solo flourishes – her music doesn't sing itself. She has been accused of a variety of infelicities including parallel octaves, excessively doubled thirds, and clunky harmonic progressions. Some musicologists dub her amateurish, while others wonder if these things were acceptable among professional musicians of the time.

Of 17th-century female composers, she may not seem as fascinating as Barbara Strozzi with her titillating reputation as a Venetian courtesan, and she isn't as well-known among the musical nuns as Cozzolani and Vizzana et al. To cap it all, her 400th birthday in September has fallen at an unfortunate time, with many performing tributes and recordings in danger of cancellation or postponement due to the Covid-19 pandemic. She stated that she wrote music not to gain credit in the world, but so that all would know she was devoted to the Virgin Mary; but we can hope that her worldly credit will grow as many more of her works will become accessible after this 400th anniversary. ■

*Rebecca Tavener is a singer and director specialising in early and contemporary music. She is founder-director of Canty, Scotland's only professional medieval music group.*

◁ There is a growing body of evidence that female religious choirs sang all the parts, and Ignazio Donati, working in Novara in the early 1600s and composing for nuns, wrote in 1623 about female tenors:

First, then, the six part-books may be sung by six solo voices. Parts may be omitted; but if there are not enough sopranos, the first soprano may be sung by a tenor, placed some distance from the principal tenor. Nuns ... may sing the bass an octave higher, thereby making a contralto part.

Leonarda wrote several works in stile antico, including a complete Vespers sequence, but most of her liturgical works are in the concertato style. Her Mass and Psalm settings have sections for full choir alternating with soloists and instrumental ritornelli. Dance sections and frequent changes of mood characterise her music and reveal her up-to-the-minute knowledge of musical tastes. Though she stipulates organ as the sole accompaniment to most of her vocal works, she does also call for

*Scattered leaves ... from our Scrapbook*

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however much emotional power it has,  
and that is why I write  
only when I am inspired.  
If one can relate to a piece  
only intellectually,  
then it isn't worthwhile;  
for good music must also reach  
that very old-fashioned and  
often cursed resource, the heart."

Eugene Zador

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# Work in progress

With three projects in the UK and the reconstruction of an 18th-century organ with many layers of history, Flentrop Orgelbouw are engaged with a dazzling array of historic material, writes **Chris Bragg** WORKSHOP PHOTOS BY ROSS LUESCHER

For a considerable portion of Flentrop Orgelbouw's near 120-year history, the Zaandam workshop in the Netherlands has maintained a consistent status as one of the most influential in the world. A perpetual search for knowledge, in parallel with a constant process of evolution, pervades a restoration portfolio of almost unparalleled diversity and new organs which feed off the lessons that such projects teach.

Readers might be forgiven for equating Flentrop's significance to the 20th-century art of organ building with the instruments of Dirk Andries Flentrop, whose version of what would retrospectively be typified as the 'neo-baroque' found enormous favour in the

USA and elsewhere. However, the workshop's current director, Erik Winkel, believes that a questing for historically inspired sounds has been present since the firm's founding by Hendrik Wicher Flentrop: 'He was organist of the Westzijderkerk next to the workshop. In 1900, the 1712 Duyschot organ was rebuilt by Steenkuyl with a pneumatic action and romantic sound and his lack of satisfaction at the result prompted him to found the firm.' Research, and constant hands-on contact with old material, have always played a determining role in creating instruments in which the inter-relationships between each aspect (physical layout, materials, sound, touch, winding etc) is the governing

principle. D.A. Flentrop was responsible for unusually conservative restoration projects from the 1930s onwards and, even though commercial pressures meant that early efforts varied in their approach, his worldwide reputation in the field was assured by the time of his retirement in 1976. The 1970s also saw the first steps beyond the modernist ideals of the reform movement, when projects included the reconstruction of the Westzijderkerk organ, and directorship passed to Hans Steketee whose influence had already been significant for a decade or more.

Today that long-matured role of research is coming to the fore in a project in Mölln, Schleswig-Holstein, where an organ with an

►

▼ Klaas Koelewijn pre-voices a new organ for Birmingham Conservatoire





## Flentrop Orgelbouw – how it all began

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© FLENTROP ORGELBOUW



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▲ (from left) The firm's founder, H.W. Flentrop (1927); D.A. Flentrop at the organ in Evora Cathedral (1967); J.A. Steketee (1995), who took over the firm's leadership in 1976

Flentrop Orgelbouw traces its history back to 1903 when Hendrik Wicher Flentrop (1866-1950) established a piano and organ business, initially in Koog aan de Zaan. This was in the early stages of the relatively brief heyday of industrial organ building in the Netherlands, with pneumatic action and pipes supplied from German trade houses. Although neither Flentrop nor his head of workshop Johannes Hilboesen (who had worked for the traditional Alkmaar firm of Ypma) were fond of this style, commercial reality meant that a number of organs were rebuilt with pneumatic action. In addition, a small number of new pneumatic instruments were built, including the 1937 organ for the World Fair in Paris which earned the firm a Grand Prix. Tonally, however, contact with Albert Schweitzer from 1922 onwards, and with the Mahrenholz-designed Furtwängler and Hammer organ at the Marienkirche in Göttingen, started to influence both scaling and specifications during the 1930s.

H.W. Flentrop's son, Dirk Andries Flentrop (1910-2003), returned from an apprenticeship with Frobenius in Denmark keen to embrace mechanical action and slider chests. The firm's first mechanical actions date from 1933 and the last non-mechanical organs were built 10 years later. By 1948, the firm had established its own pipeshop. The 1950 organ at Loenen aan de Vecht was an important breakthrough:

all pipes bar the shallots of two reed stops were made in Zaandam and the organ is housed in a reconstruction of an 18th-century case lost in a fire, with a Rugwerk added in a complementary vernacular. The changing ecology of the Dutch organ world is evident in the remarkable restorations in 1949 and 1955 respectively of the Schnitger organs at Alkmaar and Zwolle, the latter of which had been slated for electrification. By the end of the decade, D.A. Flentrop's much heralded first organs in the USA had been completed, most notably that at Harvard University, commissioned and championed by E. Power Biggs. By the time of his retirement in 1976, more than 70 organs had been sent across the Atlantic. Two of these illustrate well the changing priorities of the workshop. In 1965, the firm completed a IV/55 instrument for St Mark's Cathedral in Seattle with swell box, electric stop and combination action, a modern case and Schwimmer regulators. In 1976, Duke University received its IV/66 organ in a case heavily influenced by 18th-century northern European examples, with mechanical action throughout and wedge bellows. Both organs remain highly esteemed.

The Duke instrument marked the passing of Flentrop's leadership to J.A. Steketee (1936-2010), whose influence on artistic development had been significant for some time. Under his direction, large organs

were sent all over the world including the pair of cathedral instruments for Dunblane and Chicago, perhaps among the most intriguingly durable statements of 1980s eclecticism on a substantial scale. Major restorations included those of the Van Hagerbeer/Schnitger (1645/1725) organ at Alkmaar, the Hocque/Heynemann (1638/1787) organ at the Cathedral of Den Bosch, and the 126-stop Walcker organ (1884) at Riga Cathedral in Latvia.

The evolution of a management team consisting of organ builders with long experience in the company produced a succession of guiding lights: first, Cees van Oostenbrugge (1947-2008), under whose leadership the 1511 Van Covelens organ at Alkmaar was restored to great acclaim, and subsequently Frits Elshout (b.1952). Since the millennium, projects have included the reconstruction of the 17th-century 32ft organ at the Katharinenkirche in Hamburg (IV/61) on the basis of 520 historic pipes and photographic material from prior to the organ's destruction during the second world war.

Erik Winkel became director of the company in 2016, having worked for Flentrop since 1998. Significant projects completed under his guidance have included the III/34 organ at the Royal College of Music in London, and the restoration of the 1611/33 Hummel/Nitrowski organ in Olkusz, Poland.

◀ exceptionally complex history is undergoing restoration and partial reconstruction. 'It's an organ with many layers,' says Winkel. 'There are 16ft pipes from 1436 in thick lead, probably originally tuned Pythagorean. Then Jacob Scherer added a Hauptwerk in 1558, but much is unclear in the contract. Hans Köster added a Rückpositiv 10 years later. Then Friedrich Stellwagen added a Brustwerk and changed the concept some more. In 1754 the organ was rebuilt again in baroque style, with a new case by Christoph-Julius Bunting. He was a good organ builder but exactly what he did was unclear and he had problems with money and alcohol. The organ was later changed by Steyn, Marcussen and Kemper, among others.' So, where to start? The reconstruction, which includes entirely new reeds, takes as its basis the Bunting concept where evidence allows, but with some likely adaptations in the voicing for the benefit of the earlier pipework and overall cohesion. The required detective work is daunting, as Ross Luescher, Flentrop's Scottish team member, acknowledges: 'If you divide all the surviving flue pipes into individual stops based on builder and function (an eye-watering task in itself) you end up with 50-plus stops, but from the extensive archival information we know it could never have been more than around 32. We've tried to piece together how each builder reused the pipework of his predecessor and, using the pipe markings and a lot of creative thinking, trace the

## 'We behave less like organ builders, and more like archaeologists and conservationists'

course of each pipe through the organ. Bunting's later work had very little logic: there are pipes on which he wrote three or four differing pitch inscriptions before finally giving up.'

How, then, has Flentrop's approach to this kind of complex restoration evolved? 'We're more patient and precise than 30 years ago,' says Winkel. 'We behave less like organ builders, and more like archaeologists and conservationists.' Sometimes, difficult changes produce important breakthroughs. 'After the GOArt North German Organ project, we started experimenting with casting on sand. There was a lot of resistance because some of the pipemakers perceived it to be "technically" inferior. It cost time and energy, there was sand all over the workshop, we nearly gave up. But the aural result was so spectacular, it settled the argument very quickly; we now cast on sand whenever appropriate to the project.'

Following recent organs at Sidney Sussex College, Cambridge and the Royal College of Music, Flentrop are now working on no fewer than three further projects for the UK, encompassing a characteristically broad variety of styles and material. The first is for another Cambridge college, Peterhouse, and is a collaboration with Klais. As it stood, the Peterhouse organ contained 10 stops of

18th-century pipework by John Snetzler. The 'new' instrument will be unusual in having two consoles, one of which will recreate the experience of playing the original 1765 Snetzler instrument and the other, more modern, accommodating the day-to-day requirements for choral accompaniment according to present-day Anglican norms. It's an original solution to an oft-encountered dilemma and one which has caused much social media bewilderment. But Winkel is excited about the possibilities: 'Klais and Flentrop submitted different visions for the organ. In truth, the college also had two different visions, as did the two advisers. But the college was very clever in taking the time to find ways of bringing those visions together; not a pure reconstruction, but not a compromise either. The goal is to provide the organ scholars with two outstanding but distinct experiences; on the one hand, playing a Snetzler organ with GG and short compass manuals, and no pedal; and on the other, an outstanding organ for accompanying the choir.' Once again, detective work is paramount. Luescher explains: 'Only the flue pipework and Snetzler's case survived, so we have to reconstruct Snetzler's soundboards, winding, actions and console. This required thorough examination and documentation of other ▶

▼ Restoring a historical organ for Mölln: (l to r) Wiete van der Putten reconstructs the bellows frame from reclaimed wood; Geert Spronk planes a slider for the new Brustwerk soundboard; Ross Luescher studies historic pipework







▲ The Birmingham Conservatoire organ, rooted in the soundworld of Arp Schnitger (clockwise, from top l): Dick Koomans pre-voicing; Sander van Egmond assembling the key action; the new instrument under construction



◀ surviving examples throughout Britain. Since most of Snetzler's larger church organs also miss these elements, we focused on the better-preserved, large chamber organs, particularly those at Cobham Hall and Clare College, Cambridge. A comparison between the console in Rotherham Minster (currently held in a display cabinet) and the smaller house organs shows that the refined delicacy of elements such as the turned mahogany stopknobs is sustained through all instruments, both large and small. The dual-nature of the Peterhouse concept is still being developed, but some clever solutions are becoming clear: the short-compass Echo on the Snetzler console, for example, extended (with pipework based on Snetzler material) to form part of a full-compass Swell on the modern console. Erik Winkel is particularly keen to stress the project's educational aspects: 'In some ways the real research will begin when we leave and the organ scholars start to discover new possibilities by listening and experimenting at both consoles.'

At Birmingham Conservatoire, meanwhile, Henry Fairs and Daniel Moulton sought a new organ for teaching 17th- and 18th-century repertoire in the organ studio of the institution's new £57m facility. The organ, rooted in the soundworld of Arp Schnitger, is closely related to a recently finished Flentrop instrument in Dypvåg, Norway. In both locations a lack of height and a dry acoustical environment prompted a solution with two manual divisions on a single wind-chest. 'The concept is borrowed from the 1698 Schnitger organ at Dedesdorf,' explains Winkel. Whereas Dedesdorf is a 4ft instrument, in Birmingham the concept has been adapted to accommodate an 8ft Principal to low C, at the expense of a Brustwerk; 'maybe not so attractive for the organist in such intimate spaces.'

Perhaps the most exciting project, however, concerns the restoration, alongside Nicholson and Co., of the 1877/1893 Cavaillé-Coll organ at Manchester Town Hall, the largest and most significant organ in the UK by the 19th century's most important organ builder. Having been rebuilt by Lewis and Co. in 1912 and electrified by Jardines in 1970, the parallels with the 1871 Cavaillé-Coll now in the Philharmonie in Haarlem, and restored by Flentrop in 2005, are obvious. 'Once again, the biggest challenge is to reconstruct the action,' notes Winkel. 'When we restored Haarlem, we visited many organs; but we have to realise that Manchester has its own idiosyncrasies. It's too easy to assume that because Cavaillé-Coll did something one way in one organ, he did the same

elsewhere. This is where experience can also be dangerous.' The collaboration with Nicholson & Co. might not seem a likely one, but Winkel is quick to extol its merits: 'Organs are an endangered species, so we should work together to save the culture. Our strong points may be very different but we already had excellent contact with Andrew Caskie, and we're both open-minded enough to embrace other ways of working. The whole process and the experience we gain from it will be divided equally.'

What, then, of the challenges of building organs in the middle of a global pandemic? 'The workshop didn't fall under the Dutch government's "intelligent lockdown". But of course we had to apply the general restrictions of physical distancing: there are only four people allowed in the canteen, and so on. There's been a big difference between Dutch clients who have been very creative about maintaining physical distancing while allowing access, and clients elsewhere where lockdown has been absolute. The big effects for us will be in two years' time when the current projects are complete. You can't really plan for that, but it makes no sense to downsize the staff: it takes 10 years to train an organ builder.' ■

*Chris Bragg studied organ at the former RSAMD, and the Conservatories of Amsterdam and Utrecht. He is head of programming at the University of St Andrews Music Centre and artistic director of St Andrews Organ Week as well as a freelance organist, teacher, writer and translator.*

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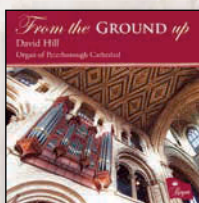
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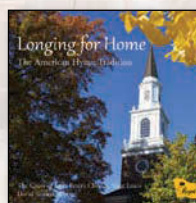
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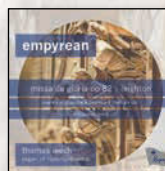
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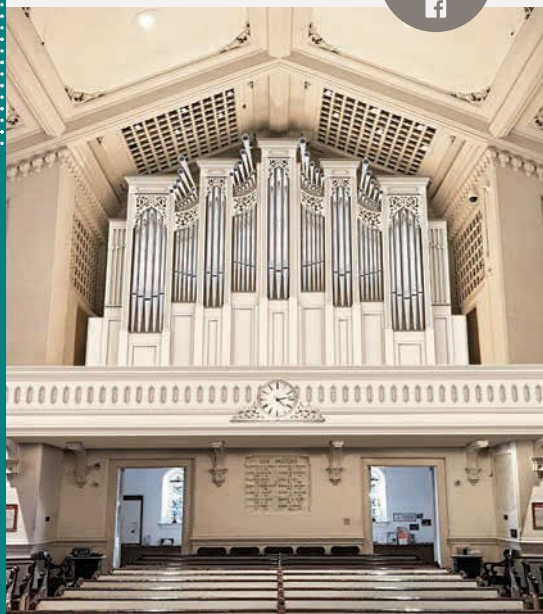
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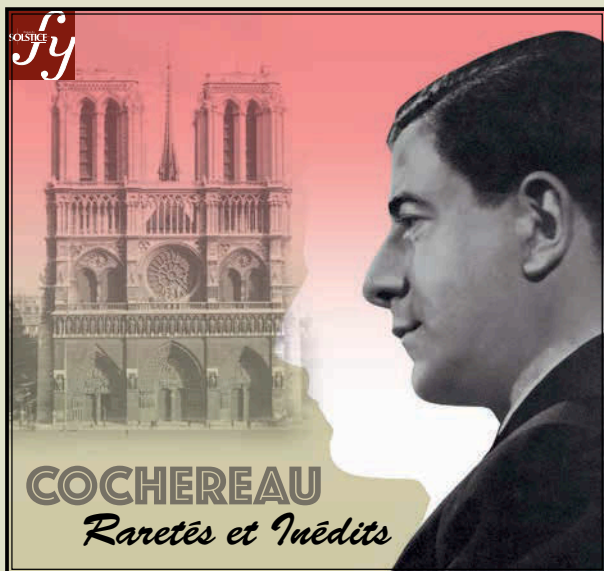


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## David Hill answers your questions about all matters relating to choirs and their conductors

### **S**inging rhythmically: how can we work as singers and conductors to improve this aspect?

There is a story that when Sir Thomas Beecham was told about an organist who had recently died and that the epitaph on his grave, below his name, stated 'Organist and Musician', Sir Thomas replied, 'Surely not the two in the same grave.' My friends and colleagues might well chastise me for suggesting there might be a similar comparison with singers and rhythm! I jest, but as an initial keyboard player, violinist and then singer, I admit to viewing this from other angles. I have become completely sympathetic as to why singing rhythmically can be difficult, and will try and unravel some of the reasons.

Singing, as an art form, requires a person to prepare the breath that then assists in producing the sound with vowels and consonants. There is the difficult process of engaging pitch memory and aural agility in order to sing whatever rhythms are required. Then add to that a conductor insistent on singers watching a beat – which might require a deal of deciphering in itself – and moving exactly in time with his/her pulse. How is all this possible? In support of singers, this is a mighty agenda needing immediate reaction, so it's not unsurprising many find it difficult to combine all these

elements in time with the music they are joining.

How can all this work more efficiently? It's an unwritten contract between singers, their colleagues and the conductor, for each to work on solutions. Here are some initial thoughts for singers:

- ▶ **Breath preparation** This is the most common reason why sound is delayed. Breathing deep and early (but not too early!) and then engaging eyes for the beat will bring calm authority to your contribution.
- ▶ **Work at the text** Using tongue, teeth and lips, imagine all the words being formed earlier than you might think. Often consonants need to begin before the beat to enable the vowel to be formed in time.
- ▶ When taking the breath, **think of the pitch** you will sing: try and hear it in your head before you begin as this will enable the sound to be better placed.
- ▶ **Use and flow of the breath** All singing is about where you are within the circle of air. Knowing where you are going to breathe next, and looking ahead for that, will improve the musical line. Put breath marks into your copy. That will assist your understanding of the musical architecture.
- ▶ **Fast or complicated text?** Practise it slowly, gradually speeding up. By doing this, you will also be helping to memorise those sections. We really can rely on our memory, much more than we do, to help us learn more thoroughly.
- ▶ **Internal metronome** Singers, players and conductors all need to sense a pulse: it is the backbone of any music-making. First, sing a section with a metronome; second, repeat it, but this time clapping your hands while singing; third, do it with no other assistance – just your singing voice. Finally, switch on the metronome to see if you remained in tempo.
- ▶ **Memory** I mentioned when practising how the memory can really help us. Things committed to memory, or assisted by it, allow us to sing without relying so heavily on looking at the music. This will allow the development of other skills: listening to

others, concentrating on tone production and rhythm alongside connecting with the conductor.

### **Conductors**

- ▶ Understand the difficulties and technical challenges the singers are dealing with and find methods of empowering them to overcome the challenges. Rehearsal techniques are the solutions, many of which can be developed from the list of the singers' points earlier.
- ▶ Demanding the eyes of all musicians initially is an unreasonable expectation given the number of issues involved. Gradually, and through teaching in a carefully prepared way, more attention can be requested and expected.
- ▶ Ensure clarity of gesture and precision of pulse: the more the group can be engaged with eyes – along with all else which is required – then the shaping and direction of the music can really begin and an interpretation unfold.

I hope this is a helpful introduction to what is a hugely interesting and complex subject. Please do feel you can interact and add to the discourse. ■

*David Hill is musical director of The Bach Choir and Leeds Philharmonic Society, principal conductor of Yale Schola Cantorum, and associate guest conductor of Bournemouth Symphony Orchestra.*

### ▼ Ensure clarity of gesture and precision of pulse



Do you have any questions relating to choral direction and singing? Send them to David Hill via the editor: [maggie.hamilton@markallengroup.com](mailto:maggie.hamilton@markallengroup.com)





## Rebecca Tavener visits the Italian town of Lucca, where a young Puccini stole organ pipes to fund his smoking habit

**D**oes some terrible Karmic retribution await organists who abuse their instruments? You may wonder when you consider the youthful behaviour of Giacomo Puccini, reluctant organist par excellence, which was fatally punished in his middle age. Puccini was the last in a dynasty of organist-composers in the magnificently walled city of Lucca in north-west Tuscany, just south of the Alpi Apuane and north of Pisa. A city so historically important that it minted its own coinage and sent ambassadors to foreign courts – open your copy of *War and Peace* and you will find it mentioned in the opening paragraph – Lucca is a place of elegance and gentle charm. Napoleon was just one of the important

figures who left a lasting impression on the city, along with some fine architecture. The Romans gave Lucca a formal street-plan and the elliptical arena now called the Piazza Anfiteatro; medieval barons and merchants built stately streets of *palazzi* and endowed ornate churches; and the Medici constructed the unique, wide city walls, now a circular park for the city, constantly busy with walkers, runners, bicycles, venerable citizens playing chess, and dog-walkers: the perfect people-watching venue.

In his youth Puccini played the organs at several of Lucca's 40 Romanesque churches including San Pietro Somaldi, and legends abound of his irreverent selection of melodies on which to improvise

during Mass, scandalising the clergy and congregation. He also developed an addiction to tobacco which led, allegedly, to his theft of metal organ pipes to sell as scrap in order to fund his habit. During this early part of his career he wrote organ works and motets, including a Requiem, a *Motet for San Paolino*, a setting of *Vexilla regis* for two male voices, and a solo soprano setting of *Salve del ciel regina*. Today, only his *Messa di Gloria* from this period is regularly performed.

The Puccini clan first made its musical mark on Lucca with Giacomo Snr (1712-81), organist and composer for the Duomo di San Martino and a colleague of another Lucchese musical luminary, Luigi Boccherini (1743-1805). He was succeeded at the Duomo organ console by his son, Antonio (1747-1832), also a composer, and one of Antonio's sons, Domenico (1772-1815), a writer of comic operas as well as sacred music. Domenico's son Michele (1813-64) became a renowned expert in counterpoint – among his works is an *Ecce sacerdos* in the form of a 32-part canon. Works by the Puccinis can be heard on CDs made by the Duomo choir, available from the gift shop; but before raiding the souvenir stall, visitors should take in the full magnificence of the art-rich Duomo, visit the mysterious 8th-century relic, the Volto Santo (Holy Face), which is paraded round the candle-lit town for the Luminaria Festival on 12 September, and meditate in wonder at the beautiful tomb of Ilaria del Carretto, a marble masterpiece by Jacopo della Quercia. Other churches that are 'must-sees' on the tourist

▼ The walled city of Lucca celebrates its most famous son



HENRY LOUIS ANDREIN





HENRY LOUIS ANDREIN



HENRY LOUIS ANDREIN

▲ (l) The Piazza Anfiteatro, originally created by the Romans; (r) the Duomo di San Martino is rich in art treasures

trail are the Basilica of San Frediano with its iridescent mosaic and elegant columns, repurposed from the Roman forum, and San Michele with its fantastically ornate Romanesque façade.

Giacomo Puccini Jnr was born in an apartment in central Lucca, now his birthplace museum, where you can browse through his letters and other memorabilia as a turbo-powered sound system blows you away with selections from his operas. To follow Giacomo's story beyond Lucca, visit his house and opera festival at Torre del Lago (c.30km west).

The Puccinis were not the only musical sons of Lucca whose fame extended beyond its walls: Francesco Barsanti (1690-1775) was a flautist, oboist and composer who spent most of his professional life in London and Edinburgh. More famously, Luigi Boccherini received his first music lessons at the age of five from his father who taught him the cello; he then continued his studies at the age of nine with Abbé Vanucci, *maestro di cappella* of the Duomo. His fame is preserved in Lucca by the Istituto Boccherini, a highly significant and effective place of study for advanced music students, which also has a delightful performing venue in a former church.

If matters spiritual intrigue you, the Via Francigena, an ancient pilgrim route from Canterbury to Rome, has been revitalised. A new museum in a medieval building on the city wall tells its story with interactive displays. The wall boasts other museums and exhibition spaces, also making an incomparable stage for the annual Comics

and Games convention, the largest in Italy, which finds hosts of super-heroes, sci-fi characters, fantasy warriors and princesses, robots, and mythical beasts parading on the walls and through the streets.

On days of inclement weather, shelter, edification and beauty can be found in museums such as Palazzo Mansi and Villa Guinigi. The Guinigi, Lucca's medieval ruling family, built an extraordinary tower: the spectacular view from the top, as

performances in the Baptistry, an opera season at the Teatro Giglio; the Lucca Summer Festival with top headlining acts such as Elton John, the Rolling Stones, and Paul McCartney; and the Virtuoso & Belcanto festival comprising advanced training and competitions for instrumentalists for two weeks in July, dedicated to masterclasses from top tutors and performances from students and *maestri*, open to the public.

## The Via Francigena, an ancient pilgrim route from Canterbury to Rome, has been revitalised

you stand among olive trees, takes in the Monte Pisano to the south and the Alpi Apuane mountains to the north as well as a breath-taking vista of the city. For visual pleasures at ground level, visiting sculpture exhibitions include the biennial Cartasia show of creations made entirely from paper. Superb refreshments are always within reach and, besides the regional wines, you should sample a plate of *tordelli Lucchese* (ravioli with meaty sauce), and *buccelato*, a loaf of the fruit-laden festive bread. As you stroll about, you may be beguiled by the classy shops of the Via Filungo. There are also local crafts, such as at the print shop of Signor Spinelli, who will proudly show you his long-service certificate as a tenor in the Duomo choir. Other amateur musical organisations include a choral society (Polifonica Lucchese), and a jazz club.

Live professional music events include, besides ubiquitous 'three tenors'

A walk on the south-west corner of the wall reveals a huge 19th-century tobacco factory complex due for redevelopment. Puccini's theft of organ pipes to feed his tobacco habit may seem amusing, but the addiction acquired so early in life led to the throat cancer that killed him. It was an end more cruel and protracted than the beheading of Turandot's unsuccessful suitors, and it deprived us of discovering where the extraordinary harmonic adventure of Puccini's last opera might have led. ■

*It is easy to reach Lucca from the UK: fly to Pisa and take the Lucca bus, air-conditioned and cheap, from the airport. Don't bring a car, as access within the wall is very strictly controlled and it is easy to hire one for days out (although you may never want to leave), and excursions by train or coach to Florence are recommended, as driving there is a nightmare of exquisite torment.*



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# CHOIR & ORGAN NEXT ISSUE NOVEMBER/DECEMBER 2020

## BEARING GIFTS

Composer, conductor, educator, producer, presenter – the many sides of James Whitbourn.

## ORGELBAU GOLL

The Lucerne workshop of the Swiss organ builders is busy creating practice organs with simplicity and elegance.

## GOLDBERG BAROQUE ENSEMBLE

Polish and foreign graduates make up this vocal-instrumental group which specialises in performing early Gdansk music.

## TREADING TREMULOUSLY

John Scott-Whiteley considers the use of the tremulant in the organ works of J.S. Bach.

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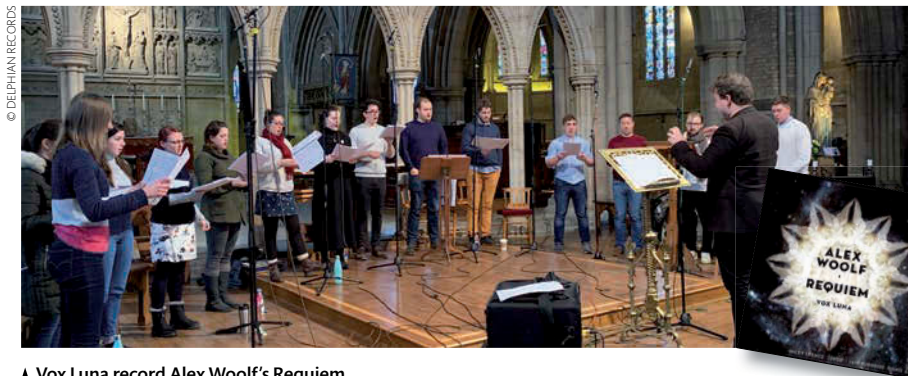
Paul Spicer ponders how to work with the Conservatoire's Chamber Choir in the new academic year.

## Plus...

International news and previews, specialist reviews, readers' offers, and a preview of competitions in 2021.



## NEW DISCS COMING OUT IN... SEPTEMBER/OCTOBER 2020



▲ Vox Luna record Alex Woolf's Requiem

In his new Requiem, **Alex Woolf** follows the contemporary tradition of selecting which texts to keep, which to omit, and which non-liturgical texts to include to help to convey a personal response to the theme of dying. In keeping with the more intimate feel of this piece, which is set for tenor solo, choir, piano, cello and organ,

Woolf abridged the Introit and Offertory, and completely omitted the Dies Irae, Lux aeterna and Libera me. He has also made use of three poems by the Welsh poet Gillian Clarke (b.1937): *The Fall*, *A Crowd of Cares*, and *The Year's Midnight*, which he explains thus: 'By invoking the language of The Fall to refer no longer to a "fall from grace" but

rather to a natural cycle of renewal, this movement advances the despair-to-hope, sin-to-redemption narrative which I hope permeates the work as a whole.'

This premiere recording is performed by Vox Luna, with Nicky Spence (tenor), Iain Burnside (piano), Philip Higham (cello) and Anthony Gray (organ), conducted by the composer and released on the Delphian label [DCD 34240].

So renowned is **James MacMillan** for his choral works that it's easy to overlook his organ canon. An album entirely devoted to his works for this instrument, performed by Stephen Farr on the Rieger organ in St Giles' Cathedral, Edinburgh, is therefore welcome [Resonus RES 10266]. Meanwhile, Swedish composer-organist **Gunnar Idenstam** – a former Chartres winner – performs his own compositions on the organ of Monaco Cathedral [Toccata Classics TOCC 0495]. ■

### CHORAL CDS

#### All Things Are Quite Silent

Pembroke College Choir/Lapwood  
Signum SIGCD 642

#### And I Saw a New Heaven

Clifton Cathedral Choir/Ogden  
Hoxa Sounds HS1036-18

#### Ave Rex Angelorum

Choir of Keble College, Oxford/Martin  
CRD Records CRD 3537

#### J.S. Bach: Motets

Ensemble Pygmalion/Pichon  
Harmonia mundi HMM 902657

#### Banquet of Voices

Cambridge Singers/Rutter  
Collegium Records CSCD 525

#### Be All Merry

Choral Scholars of University College  
Dublin/Earley  
Signum SIGCD 643

#### The Big Picture

Bristol Choral Society/Campbell  
Delphian DCD 34242

#### Britten: A Ceremony of Carols et al

Choir of Clare College/Ross  
Harmonia mundi HMM 905329

#### A Ceremony of Carols

Choir of The Queen's College/Rees  
Signum SIGCD 627

#### M.A. Charpentier: Messe à 4 chœurs

Ensemble Correspondances/Dauce  
Harmonia mundi HMM 902640

#### Chanticleer sings Christmas

Chanticleer/Scott  
Parlophone Records 0190295228781

### Christmas Carols

SWR Vokalensemble/Creed  
SWR Classic SWR 19094CD

#### Christmas from St Catharine's

Choirs of St Catharine's College/  
Wickham  
Resonus RES 10268

#### Christmas in Puebla

Siglo de Oro/Allies  
Delphian DCD 34238

#### Gaudete!

Choir of Bath Abbey/Williams  
Regent REGCD 555

#### Handel: Semele

Sols, Monteverdi Choir/Gardiner  
Soli Deo Gloria SDG733

#### Nicolò Jommelli: Requiem

Sols, Coro e Orchestra Ghislieri/Prandi  
Arcana A477

#### Duarte Lobo (c.1565-1646): Masses,

#### Responsories & Motets

Cupertinos/Toscano  
Hyperion CDA 68306

#### Longing for Home

Choir of Saint Peter's Church/Sinden  
Regent REGCD 509

#### Jaakko Mäntyjärvi: Choral Music

Trinity College Choir/Layton  
Hyperion CDA 68266

#### Purcell: Royal Welcome Songs for

King Charles II, vol.3  
The Sixteen/Christophers  
Coro COR 16182

### Sacred Ayres

Chapel Choir of Selwyn College,  
Cambridge/MacDonald  
Regent REGCD 536

#### So Hallow'd the time

Taylor Festival Choir/Taylor  
Delos DE 3580

#### Villette: Messe 'Da Pacem'

Choir of Royal Holloway/Gough  
Ad Fontes AF 004

#### Alex Woolf: Requiem

Vox Luna/Woolf  
Delphian DCD 34240

### KEYBOARD CDS

#### J.S. Bach: Goldberg Variations

Marcin Swiatkiewicz (hpschd)  
Rubicon RCD 1064

#### From the Ground up

David Hill, Peterborough  
Cathedral  
Regent REGCD 539

#### Gunnar Idenstam: Metal Angel

Gunnar Idenstam, Monaco  
Cathedral  
Toccata Classics TOCC 0495

#### James MacMillan: Complete Organ Works

Stephen Farr, Rieger organ, St  
Giles' Cathedral, Edinburgh  
Resonus RES 10266

#### Organ Music at Clifton

Stephen Bryant, Clifton Cathedral  
Hoxa Sounds HS910-28

### Organ Musique – Musik – Muziek 1530-1660

Aude Heurtematte, Thomas organ  
(2010), Champcueil, France  
Raven OAR-165 (2CDs)

#### Johann Pachelbel: Music for Organ, Harpsichord, Clavichord

Andrus Madsen  
Raven OAR-919 (2CDs)

#### Soli Deo Gloria: Bach

Andrew Balio (tpt), Bruce Bengtson  
(org)  
Delos DE 3560

#### Widor: Organ Symphonies, vol.3

Christian von Blohn, St Joseph's  
Church, Sankt Ingbert, Germany  
Naxos 8574206





# REVIEWS

Rating: ★★★★★ Highly recommended ★★★★★ Very good ★★★★★ Good ★★★★★ Average ★ Poor



## THIS ISSUE'S REVIEWERS

**Early Music Editor**  
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## KEYBOARD CDS

**'Écrire le temps' (Nicolas de Grigny: *Livre d'orgue*; Nicolas Lebègue: *Motets*)**

Nicolas Bucher, organ by Marin Carouge/Michel Garnier (1683/1727/1995), Abbatale Saint-Robert, La Chaise-Dieu (Haute-Loire); Marion Tassou (s), Vincent Lièvre-Picard (t), Ensemble Gilles Binchois / Dominique Vellard (dir) Hortus 184 (2CDs) [159:13]

★★★★



This fine project records Grigny's *Livre d'orgue* (1699) within the

context of plainchant, together with four motets by Lebègue in the hymn-suites, all liturgically appropriate. The organ is highly effective, tuned in a modified meantone temperament and with all the required tonal colours. Only the powerful Positif cromorne tends to overbalance the Récit cornet in the five-part fugues. A team of rich resonant voices sings the plainchant, here stylishly ornamented, and soprano and tenor soloists perform Lebègue's motets with basso continuo (1687): *Motet pour le Saint-Esprit*, *Pange lingua*, *Ave verum corpus* and *Salve regina*.

Although both Bach and Walther copied Grigny's *Livre*, the original print was prone to errors. Bucher makes many alterations (mercifully, he plays a b1 in the notorious bar 35 of the *Récit de tierce en taille*!). *Inégalité* is not always thought through sufficiently, making the *Basse de trompette* and the passages of Italian string writing in the *dialogues* sound trite, and the occasional slurs suggesting short-long *inégalité* are ignored. There are also instances of rather too much rhythmic

flexibility (even whole beats omitted), suggesting some over-interpreting. However, there are many splendid moments in which both tempo and *inégalité* are excellently judged. A worthwhile achievement.

DAVID PONSFORD

**François Couperin  
L'Alchimiste: Les années  
de jeunesse**

Bertrand Cuiller, harpsichord by Philippe Humeau (2014) after Antoine Vater (Paris, 1738); Jean-Luc Ho, historic organs: a) unnamed (1663), Notre-Dame de Juvigny, b) Jean Boizard (1714), Saint-Michel de Thiérache; voices and serpent of Les Meslanges Harmonia mundi HMM 902377.79 (3CDs) [188:13]

★★★★



This is volume two of 'Couperin the Alchemist', in which his

complete harpsichord music will form the central core, but including guests playing Couperin's other repertoires. This recording focuses on 'early' works, with the first two *ordres* from *Premier livre de pièces de clavecin* (1713) together with the *Pièces d'orgue* (1690) containing the *Messe pour les couvents* and *Messe pour les paroisses*. The booklet contains essays on Couperin's life when organist of Saint-Gervais (Denis Herlin), and on the use of plainchant in the organ Masses (Thomas van Essen). Les Meslanges perform the chant according to neo-Gallican reforms from the 1680s, accompanied (correctly) by a serpent, with pronunciation researched from Gillet-Vaudelin's *Instructions* (1713). While the *Cunctipotens genitor Deus* chant is prescribed for the *Paroisses* Mass, Paul Damance's

*Messe de Sainte Cecile* (1687) chant is used for *Messe pour les couvents*.

Hearing the organ Masses juxtaposed with the harpsichord *ordres* adds strength to my conviction that the few ornaments in the organ sources, and all editions derived therefrom, are only tips of the iceberg, and that the music was intended to be played with many more ornaments. Both Cuiller and Ho recognise this, and so here the harpsichord and the organ interpretations are stylistically consistent. Both players use *notes inégales* in a loose and unpredictable manner, irrespective of genre, which in the *basses de trompette* and *dialogues sur les grands jeux* sometimes trivialise the music. More awareness of Italian influences (e.g. Corelli), and Couperin's own statement about the performance of Italian music, is needed. All the instruments are well chosen, although the harpsichord recording is very resonant, and Cuiller's habit of sustaining the dissonant auxiliaries in ornaments confuse the harmonies and textures. However, the interpretations are always interesting and stimulating, inspiring questions and further thoughts about performance practices in this music.

DAVID PONSFORD

**Alain: Trois Danses and  
other organ works**

Christophe Mantoux, Cavaillé-Coll organ, Abbey Church of St-Ouen, Rouen Raven OAR-163 (2CDs) [83:18]

★★★★



This third iteration of Christophe Mantoux's Alain recital (the first in 1992 on independent French

label Studio SM garnering a Grand Prix du Disque; the second on Motette in 2009) boasts new editing and mastering and additional, previously unreleased material from the original sessions. It's a recital that benefits from the poetic muscle of St-Ouen Abbey Church's 1890 Cavaillé-Coll, fine notes by Vincent Genvrin and, not least, Mantoux's deliberate but nuanced playing. Split across two-for-the-price-of-one discs, it is worth investigating for its dexterous and articulate exploration of Alain's enigmatic way with timbre, colour and emotion.

MICHAEL QUINN

**Vincent Persichetti: Organ  
Music**

Tom Winpenny, St Albans Cathedral

Toccata Classics TOCC 0549 [86:32]

★★★★



Vincent Persichetti (1915-87) was a key figure in American

20th-century music as both composer and teacher. Despite holding church organist positions from the age of 15, most of the organ compositions stem from the 1970s and 80s. Persichetti referred to his own style as combining 'graceful' and 'gritty' and, curiously, this recording opens with his rather turbulent final work, the chorale prelude *Give peace, O God*. Similarly gritty are the 12-tone *Parable VI* and *Do not go gentle*, a 12-minute exposition for pedals. Tom Winpenny delivers these complex works with grit too, although there seems to be little room for much expression even in the more 'graceful' and enchanting *Auden Variations* or the *Dryden Liturgical Suite*.

RUPERT GOUGH

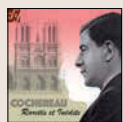
**Cochereau: Raretés et Inédits**

Pierre Cochereau, various organs

Recorded 1954-1984 (19 CDs, 1 DVD)

FY Solstice 365/84

★★★★



Since his sudden death, Pierre Cochereau's status as a figure of fascination, emulation, even obsession, has remained constant, or even grown as new generations have discovered his legacy. The drip feeding of François

Carbou's vast archive of recordings, as well as the 2004 documentary and Anthony Hammond's excellent biography, have allowed today's observers to draw their own conclusions about the most controversial (incredibly brilliant, undeniably erratic) organist of the Cathedral of Paris.

The present box set, three-quarters of which is unreleased material, largely of live concerts from the archive of the Institut National de l'Audiovisuel as well as the Carbou collection, further expands our vision of Cochereau. Encompassing recordings made over a 30-year period, it documents, warts (of which there are plenty) and all, Cochereau's development both as interpreter and improviser. As his legacy in the latter discipline has taken the dominant role in his enduring fame, it is more than interesting to (re-)consider him as an interpreter: a pupil of Dupré and successor of Vierne who flourished during the era of the 'néo-classique', he brought vast new audiences to the instrument, and imbued everything he approached with a unique flavour. Nailing my colours firmly to the mast, I think Cochereau's most important recorded interpretations are the ones he made for L'Oiseau-Lyre during the first year of his tenure at Notre-Dame: Vierne's Second Symphony, Dupré's *Symphonie-Passion* and Liszt's 'Ad Nos'. It quickly becomes evident that there is a real contradiction inherent in Cochereau the interpreter. The young man performs like an old master; broad (even slow) tempi, sometimes slightly exaggerated agogics, an innate sense of grandeur and space and, in the last movement of the *Symphonie-Passion* in particular, subtly induced drama, on the still intact (more or less) Cavaillé-Coll. These are magnificent performances by any measure and astoundingly accurate given the absence of modern editing techniques. Fast forward 20 years and Cochereau's re-recordings of these works (not included here) are the playing of a young man; faster, flashier, less faithful to the score and with the electrified and gravely altered Notre-Dame organ more visceral... though undeniably less beautiful. There is Bach (three Passacaglias is perhaps one too many) and even French classical repertoire (Julien's *Suite on the third tone* recorded in 1971 with obviously serious intent, if rather stiffly). There are also novelties for organ and orchestra: concerti by Yves de la Casinière and Roger Calmel and a transcription by Cochereau's late son, Jean-Marc, of Liszt's 'Ad Nos', sadly hampered by a dreadful orchestra (a recurring theme). There are even two Handel concerti grossi in which Cochereau plays harpsichord. Being entirely objective, some of these performances (for example, a rhythmically wayward 'Litanies' from 1970, which flashes by in a mere three-and-a-half minutes; a Bach trio sonata in which the left hand joins in two bars late; a wild and inaccurate cadenza

in the Poulenc concerto) are, frankly, terrible. Anthony Hammond notes that 'Cochereau was acutely aware as the years passed that he did not always do himself full justice in concert' and was 'sometime unprepared'. It is perhaps a pity to include such obvious examples.

Unsurprisingly, the most important recordings here are of improvisations. It is fortunate that so much of Cochereau's activity in this field, not least the vast private collection of recordings by François Carbou, was captured for posterity. I don't need to detail Cochereau's fragrant and uniquely recognisable harmonic language, the constant modulations, sense of tension, form and atmosphere, or the turbo-charged adrenaline in so many 'sorties'; it's hard not to be gripped by such raw inspiration. An early (1958) triptyque on 'Victimae Paschali' for example, is Cochereau at his towering best: a stream of clear-headed consciousness under constant control, although the organ in

## It's hard not to be gripped by such raw inspiration

Bordeaux is rather out of tune (another recurring theme). The variety of instruments heard is especially interesting. There's even a 1959 improvised symphony from Sydney Town Hall (unfortunately not in great sound), as well as improvisations on the Hartmann touring organ and instruments in the USA, Switzerland and elsewhere.

It's a shame that the booklet doesn't tell more about the instruments, especially as many (including at the cathedrals of Dijon and Bordeaux) have been significantly changed since. The organ in the Salle Gaveau was removed just two years after the present 1955 recordings and the organ heard in the Théâtre des Champs-Élysées is surely Cochereau's touring organ, rather than the long-silent Puget instrument. On the other hand, the English transcript of the 1976 radio interview on disc 19 is very welcome, and the re-release of the 2004 DVD ideal for those who missed it first time round.

This is often engrossing and historically important... and not just for Cochereau's diehard fans.

CHRIS BRAGG

▼ 'A figure of fascination and emulation': Pierre Cochereau



COURTESY SOLSTICE RECORDS



### ◀ **Mozart by Arrangement, vol.3 – music for organ**

Zeno Bianchini and Christian Lambour, Abbey of Neu St Johann, St Gallen Canton, Switzerland

Toccata Classics TOCC 0381 [67:56]

★★★★★



Surely the height of entertainment in any musician's house is busking

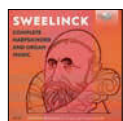
through some four-hand piano transcriptions after dinner? Drawing on the wealth of these 19th-century piano transcriptions, Zeno Bianchini and Christian Lambour have put together a diverse selection with many familiar favourites including movements from *Eine kleine nachtmusik*, the Clarinet Concerto and the Requiem. Most entertaining are the extracts from *Die Zauberflöte*, where we get to hear more of the delights of the 1779 organ in the Abbey of Neu St Johann. The playing may not be the neatest but the joy, wit and charm of Mozart translated to the organ in the hands of Bianchini and Lambour is a delight.

RUPERT GOUGH

### **Sweelinck: Complete Harpsichord and Organ Music**

Daniele Boccaccio on organs by Anon. (c.1550), Scherer (1612/13), and Schnitger (1678); harpsichord by Sebastiano Cali (2017, after Couchet 1679) Brilliant Classics 95643 (6CDs) [6:29:26]

★★★★★



This is an outstanding release of music by one of the most famous

late 16th-/early 17th-century organist-composers. Sweelinck's keyboard music is generally only known by a few works, so to have

this complete overview from a player of such ability and understanding, on four superb and appropriate instruments, is a real pleasure. Daniele Boccaccio has a natural affinity with this music, an understanding of the musical and technical demands, and uses predominantly early fingering, which matches the figurations in this music so well. The three organs are perfect for this repertoire, with all the variety of colour that Sweelinck would have had at his command in Amsterdam, and all the instruments tuned to meantone, which is so important for the harmonic colour of the music. The very first work in this set illustrates this perfectly, the *Fantasia Crommatica* giving an immediate sense of the differently-sized semitones in the descending scale. This complex work is brilliantly executed, a standard of performance which is maintained throughout this set.

Boccaccio has researched the instruments and performance practice, and gives colourful and vibrant performances, using the organs to great effect, whether in the famous echo fantasias, or less familiar Psalm and Chorale settings. The setting of *Erbarm dich mein* shows off the colours of the Schnitger, lovely flutes, rich choruses and in the final verse a classic treble reed registration with wonderfully prompt repetition and speech. The dances and secular variations, together with some free works, are played on harpsichord, and the well known *Soll es sein* shows off the fine and resonant Couchet copy. Boccaccio is as stylish on the harpsichord as on the organ. The Scherer organ gives some other earlier registration possibilities, as in Psalm 116, where the Terzcimbel

of the late renaissance is used, its octave repetitions at the same pitch giving glitter right across the keyboard in a classic solo registration. Another very well known work opens the final CD, the variations on *Mein junges Leben hat ein End*, which Boccaccio plays on the Schnitger – a really lovely performance with varied registrations that fit the music like a glove, and the notoriously difficult fast thirds and sixths played with such confident panache.

This release has altogether a consistently high standard of performance and recording quality, and sets a benchmark for the performance of this important music – music which demands not only an unusual technical facility and the right instruments, but the understanding and musicianship to bring it to life in a vibrant and exciting way.

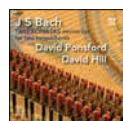
DOUGLAS HOLICK

### **J.S. Bach: Trio Sonatas BWV525-530 (arr. David Ponsford)**

David Ponsford and David Hill (hpschd)

Nimbus LC5871 [71:32]

★★★★★



This recording is inspired by the preface *L'Apothéose ... de*

*Lully* (1725), where François Couperin tells of playing trios on two harpsichords with pupils and family members. David Ponsford's arrangements therefore come with a golden mandate. Bach's three-part counterpoint generally divides quite easily between four hands, with some occasional filling-out of chords, figured bass-style. The recording conveys a compelling sense of dialogue and sociability between two virtuoso musicians

equally at one with the material, and the alternation between instruments makes great sense of Bach's antiphony and repeats. It works best in the fast movements: strings or winds would work a treat in the slower movements.

MAGNUS WILLIAMSON

### **Symphonic Organ Music by Jongen, Bach, Busoni and Liszt**

Roberto Marini, Great Tamburini Organ, Church of Santa Rita da Cascia, Mestre (Venezia)

Fugatto FUG 079 [79:40]

★★★★★



If asked to point to the greatest Italian organist since Fernando

Germani, I would undoubtedly single out his pupil Roberto Marini, who inherited from his master an affinity for the music of Max Reger – his *Gesamt-Reger* has been enthusiastically welcomed in these pages. The Germani connection is maintained in Marini's latest recording, on the III/97 Tamburini organ in the Church of Santa Rita da Cascia, Mestre – originally designed by Germani for St Mark's Basilica in Venice and completed in 1958 for Cardinal Angelo Roncalli (later Pope John XXIII), the organ was removed in 1994 and after a 14-year hiatus was heard again in its new home a few miles away in 2008. The vast tonal palette of the Tamburini may have acted as a spur to Marini to make his own organ arrangement, succeeding Bernhard Haas's of 1984, of Liszt's Piano Sonata in B minor; the kaleidoscopic colours on display just about erase memories of a grand piano's sustaining sonorities, and Marini's interpretation is predictably nuanced and

convincing. Scornful as ever of technical challenges, he follows his opening salvo of Jongen's *Sonata Eroica* with a fantastical, thoroughly organistic 16-minute arrangement of Bach's Chaconne BWV 1004 by Guilmant pupil Ulisse Matthéy (1876-1947), an important organist-composer in Italian musical circles and a favourite performer of Marco Enrico Bossi. Marini also offers a chance to hear Ferruccio Busoni's rarely recorded original organ work, the *Praeludium und Doppelfuge zum Choral* op.7/76 – the somewhat inconsequential ostinato-based Prelude, written when the composer was only 14, was conjoined many years later with a substantial Double Fugue. An outstanding CD, highly recommended.

GRAEME KAY

### Bach, Wesley, Harwood, Mozart, Franck, Ropartz, Vienne

Colin Walsh, T.C. Lewis organ, Sotto Il Monte Giovanni XXIII Fugatto FUG 080 [77:22]

★★★★★



What's an organ by the distinguished firm of T.C. Lewis doing in the

countryside of Bergamo, Italy? Sotto Il Monte Giovanni XXIII, the official name of the village in which Angelo Roncalli (later Pope John XXIII) was born, is the location of the Pontifical Institute for Foreign Missions (PIME), and its modern Seminary Church. The organ within it (unfortunately there is no general view of it in the booklet) was originally built in 1911 for the Vineyard Congregational Church in Richmond, London; substantially modified throughout its lifetime, in a remarkable rescue job the Lewis

pipework was moved to the PIME church in 2015 and, in consultation with ex-Harrisons' voicer Robert Rowley, kitted out with electric action, a new minimalist case and building frame in white with cherry-red display pipes, and some tonal alterations – Jean Guillou gave the inaugural recital. The organ's Italian custodians are inordinately proud of it, and rightly extol the beauties of its III/37 specification, a tonal palette firmly in the tradition of the Lewis instruments in Southwark Cathedral, Kelvingrove Art Gallery, and St George's, Cullercoats. It was a brilliant idea, therefore, to invite Colin Walsh, organist laureate of Lincoln Cathedral, to record an appropriate programme on the instrument. In this wide-ranging recital disc, Walsh opens with an expansive account of Bach's Prelude & Fugue in C minor, BWV 546; Victorian-era music is represented by S.S. Wesley's *Choral Song and Fugue* and Basil Harwood's *Dithyramb*. He then goes on to advertise the organ's versatility, as befits the legacy of a builder who was originally inspired by the organs built in Germany by Edmund Schulze and in France by Aristide Cavaillé-Coll: Mozart's tricky Fantasia in F minor K608 is followed by a burnished-mahogany performance of Franck's Choral no.1 in E major. Guy Ropartz's evocative *Prélude funèbre* (1896) offers a moment of quiet contemplation capitalising on the organ's softer stops before the programme ends, linking neatly back to the UK, with a Colin Walsh party-piece – Vienne's *Carillon de Westminster*. As always, the playing is immaculate – a recital disc to return to.

GRAEME KAY

### CHORAL CDS

#### Johannes de Cleve: Missa Rex Babylonis

Cinquecento

Hyperion CDA 68241 [70:51]

★★★★★



Cinquecento, the male-voice Euro super-consort, extends its

enlightening pilgrimage through the Habsburg renaissance into the masterful, inspirational polyphony of Johannes de Cleve. For the central work, a parody Mass based on Vaet's motet *Rex Babylonis* (also recorded here), they find enthrallingly deep connections with text and counterpoint. Exemplary recorded clarity and balance within the warmly resonant acoustics of Austria's Kloster Pernegg gild these imperial works, and Daniel's miraculous release from the lions' den (the text of *Rex Babylonis*) might be a metaphor for the rediscovery of so many masterworks in this essential series.

REBECCA TAVENER

#### Howells: Missa Sabrinensis; Michael 'A Fanfare Setting'

Helena Dix (s), Christine Rice (m-s), Benjamin Hulett (t), Roderick Williams (bar), Bach Choir, BBC Concert Orchestra / David Hill (dir)

Hyperion CDA 68294 [71:32]

★★★★★



By any standards, this recording of Howells' *Missa Sabrinensis* (Mass of the Severn) is a major event and superior in every way to the work's previous account on disc. Composed for the 1954 Three Choirs Festival, the *Missa Sabrinensis* unfolds as a powerful choral symphony, especially rich

in counterpoint, formal structure and independent orchestral writing. While its musical language is always recognisably Howells, it nevertheless embraces something of the Gallic impressionist beauty of Debussy and Ravel. Led by conductor David Hill, who clearly believes in every note of this piece, the Bach Choir, BBC Concert Orchestra and the fine quartet of soloists offer an exhilarating performance, which reveals this work to be a forgotten British masterpiece from the middle of the 20th century. The brief makeweight is an arrangement of Howells's most celebrated hymn tune, named after his son who died, aged 9.

PHILIP REED

#### Rosa Mystica – Musical Portraits of the Blessed Virgin Mary

Isabella Abbot Parker (s), Imogen Russell (s), Royal Birmingham Conservatoire Chamber Choir, Callum Algera (org) / Paul Spicer (dir)

Somm SOMMCD 0617 [62:45]

★★★★★



This themed disc explores the centuries-old musical devotion

to the Blessed Virgin Mary in 14 short pieces ranging from the Tudor polyphony of Nicholas Ludford's *Ave cujus conceptione* to contemporary works by figures such as Ola Gjeilo, Judith Bingham and Cecilia McDowall, as well as obvious candidates like Bruckner's *Ave Maria* and Britten, though not his *Hymn to the Virgin* but rather the far less known 'Rosa Mystica' from A.M.D.G. of 1939. Paul Spicer has instilled in his Royal Birmingham Conservatoire Chamber Choir excellent

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## EARLY MUSIC



## Rebecca Tavener rounds up the latest releases

This is a bit of a mixed bag as planned recordings and CD releases reel under the pressure of these distracted times. Finding connections and themes is a luxury that may

not be indulged, but that doesn't mean that there isn't some great stuff waiting for comment, beginning with a shout-out for the influential medieval Ensemble Gilles Binchois, celebrating its 40th year with a two-disc anthology of some of their finest recorded performances called, appropriately, **Voix du Ciel** [Evidence Classics EVCD 065]. Excellent both as tribute to a pioneering group and potential introduction to medieval vocal music, from monody through to the earliest polyphonic Mass settings, here's an adventure in extraordinary sonorities and interpretations, showcasing a magnificent achievement and promising more to come. There's a teasing bonus track from Ockeghem's Requiem which invites me to move straight along to his secular music:

**Johannes Ockeghem: Complete Songs vol.1** [Blue Heron BHCD 1010] finds 12 voices of the American group Blue Heron, more often heard in choral works, as solo consort singers in various combos. Here are exquisitely elegant interpretations, enhanced by a beautifully clear and balanced recording, in translucent acoustics. Much research has resulted in new editions by director Scott Metcalfe, and the tasteful involvement of instruments such as vielle and harp, plus the attention paid to underlay, word-stress and

▼ The Choir of Girton College give compelling interpretations of works by Ingegneri



COURTESY GIRTON COLLEGE

pronunciation, make this an outstanding effort. Excellent liner notes accompany a CD so well-filled that it jumped about on every player except the TV, but maybe only the review copy was thus contrary.

Some world premiere motet recordings and much fresh thinking of a choral war-horse combine to great effect for **Musiques pour les Funérailles Royales Espagnoles** [Regent REGCD 551], featuring La Maîtrise de Toulouse, a wonderful children's choir with a technically healthy, full-voiced, immensely musical sound, established by the Conservatoire de Toulouse. Joined by male lower voices and the brass of Les Sacqueboutiers for Victoria's arguably over-celebrated Requiem, the results are vividly energised sonorities, at times a passionately fervent wall of sound in expansive acoustics. With noble solemnity and broad, flowing tempi, this

## This is revelatory and utterly convincing Victoria

revelatory and utterly convincing Victoria is surrounded by a corona of motets from Guerrero, Marqués, Alonso Lobo, Romero, and Patiño. There could hardly be a more contrasted liturgical experience than the Anglican intimacy of **O give thanks unto the Lord – Choral works by Thomas Tomkins** [Resonus RES 10253], which showcases to superb effect the trebles of the Choir of HM Chapel Royal, Hampton Court Palace. Verse anthems, Evensong canticles, Psalm settings, and Preces and Responses from one of the leading lights of Stuart chapel music, bursting with Protestant strength and faith, meet their sonic match in 19 forthright trebles. The six men give their all and make a fine impression as soloists in verse sections, but one wonders if nine would make for optimum choral balance and blend. A Mander chamber organ provides the perfect sonorities and support for this repertoire. Although the acoustics are a little 'enclosed', the CD offers the impression of an authentic chapel event, evoking 'spirit of place' with lightness of touch and expression in these elegant, spirited performances.

Here's a corking discovery to end with, shining a spotlight on Monteverdi's teacher with world premiere recordings in **Marc'Antonia Ingegneri: Missa Laudate pueri Dominum** [Toccata Classics TOCC 0556]. Colourfully voiced women and youthful-sounding men of the Choir of Girton College, Cambridge, combine with Historic Brass of the Guildhall School and Royal Welsh College of Music & Drama to perform fresh editions by director Gareth Wilson, who moulds compelling interpretations. The central eight-part Mass setting is brilliant, ingenious stuff, offering majestic pillars of sound, elegant contrasts and liturgical colour. Though the acoustics are a little hard-edged, there's no doubting the emotional depth and commitment of all concerned. What a great and welcome find – more, please!

*Rebecca Tavener is a singer and director specialising in early and contemporary music. She is founder-director of Canty, Scotland's only professional medieval music group.*

◀ diction, evenness of tone and a bright but unforced sound, which is a pleasure to listen to. The programme is thoughtfully arranged, though there was surely room for perhaps one or two more settings on the disc. But that's a small issue when what we have is so well sung.

PHILIP REED

### Handel: *Messiah* (Dublin version 1742)

Dorothee Miels (s), Benno Schachtner (a), Benedikt Kristjánsson (t), Tobias Berndt (b), Gaechinger Cantorey / Hans-Christoph Rademann (dir)  
Accentus Music ACC 30499 (2CDs) [74:48; 62:05]

★★★★★



This is a generally fine account of a specific version of *Messiah*, namely

that presented at its premiere in Fisher's Music Hall, Dublin, in April 1742. When Handel composed in 1741 what would prove to be his most enduring work, he did not know the identity of his soloists. When he did eventually meet the solo cast, he discovered their strengths and weaknesses, and therefore needed to refashion some of the material: for example, the bass soloist, recruited from one of Dublin's cathedral choirs, was not up to Handel's original version of the rage aria 'Why do the nations', and it had to be cut in half. Most of us are now accustomed to the 1750 version of the score, so it comes as a surprise when the text appears to deviate from what we know.

Hans-Christoph Rademann and his small forces opt for nicely sprung rhythms, light articulation and neatly delivered divisions. Tempi are generally on the swift side, but there are exceptions which are

surprising: the opening of the Symphony, for example, or 'Behold, the Lamb of God'. That said, 'Let us break their bonds' is delivered at a breakneck speed. But why does Rademann start the 'Hallelujah' chorus in such a low-key fashion? That the singers are not native English speakers is occasionally apparent, and the chorus's flat (mis)pronunciation of 'to' in the opening chorus is more irritating on CD than it would be in live performance. None of the soloists is exceptional but each delivers a clean account of what Handel asks of them. It's unclear how the alto duet version of 'How beautiful are the feet' is managed: no other alto is credited and as both sound like Benno Schachtner, it's possible he duetted with himself.

PHILIP REED

### Penderecki: *St Luke Passion*

Sarah Wegener (s), Lucas Meachem (bar, Christ), Matthew Rose (b), Sławomir Holland (spkr, Evangelist), Warsaw Boys' Choir, Kraków Philharmonic Choir, Orchestre symphonique de Montréal / Kent Nagano (dir)  
Bis BIS-2287 [66:52]

★★★★★



This is an exemplary recording of the work which

propelled Penderecki, who died earlier this year, to international fame. The impact the *St Luke Passion* made in 1966 is just as powerful as when this live recording was made in 2018, at the opening concert of the Salzburg Festival. Kent Nagano is a conductor who is scrupulous in all that he does, and here he marshals his considerable forces to thrilling effect. The work – with all of Penderecki's

astonishing orchestral colours – glows afresh under Nagano's baton; Nagano's soloists are uniformly excellent and his choral singers exceptional in their unfailing commitment. A definitive recording of a modern masterpiece.

PHILIP REED

### Our Father in the Heavens – Anthems by Sir Edward Bairstow

Tewkesbury Abbey Schola Cantorum, Carleton Etherington (org) / Simon Bell (dir)  
Regent REGCD 543 [72:20]

★★★★★



The Schola Cantorum of Tewkesbury Abbey captures

the rhapsodic, often elegiac spirit of Bairstow's music wonderfully on this recording – although this made it quite hard to listen to at the end of June, when church musicians were exiled from their choirstalls and organ lofts with no indication of when they might return. How fitting that the repertoire includes Bairstow's famous setting of the Lamentation! There are fine performances of staples such as 'Blessed city, heavenly Salem' and 'Let all mortal flesh keep silence', but it is good to discover some less well-known anthems, including two first recordings. Carleton Etherington exploits the resources of the Abbey's recently refurbished Milton organ to the full, and the building's stunning acoustics play a vital part; but the stars of the show for me are the boy choristers, who have a beautiful limpid sound, ideally suited to this music, and demonstrate impressive control of colour and dynamic in Bairstow's long phrases.

CLARE STEVENS

### David Lang: *Love Fail* (version for women's chorus)

Lorelei Ensemble / Beth Willer (dir)

Cantaloupe CA21158 [50:24]

★★★★★



A modern-day meditation on the Tristan and Isolde story, filtered

through the stories of Lydia Davis, David Lang's masterpiece started out as a vocal quartet with simple percussion accompaniment. The expanded version is a gift for the Lorelei Ensemble, whose purity of diction is notable from the minimalist opening of 'He Was and She Was' to the darker moods of 'Right and Wrong' and 'I Live In Pain'. Beth Willer keeps the voices tightly marshalled but relaxed, and the work's structure – which is novelistic rather than operatic – constantly in view without becoming schematic. A wholly remarkable modern composition and a faultless performance that culminates in the prayer-like 'Head, Heart'. Proceeds from sales will go to the National Association for the Advancement of Colored People.

BRIAN MORTON

### James Primosch: *Carthage*

The Crossing / Donald Nally (dir)  
Navona NV 6287 [63:56]

★★★★★



James Primosch's music deals with the spiritual battle between certainty

and doubt, and in the title piece with the role of love and imagination in a devastated world. Its text comes from novelist Marilynne Robinson's *Housekeeping*. Other texts here are drawn from Meister Eckhart, Thomas Merton, Denise Levertov, the Latin Mass and, on ▶



**Michael Finnissy: Pious Anthems & Voluntaries**

Choir of St John's College, Cambridge, Glen Dempsey and James Anderson-Besant (org), Sarah O'Flynn (fl), Cecily Ward (vn) / Andrew Nethsingha (dir)

Signum Records SIGCD 624 (2CDs) [33:40; 50:16]

★★★★★



This remarkable recording is the culmination of Michael Finnissy's three-year residency at St John's College, Cambridge. The CD comprises a contemplative sequence of music in which Finnissy takes four composers as his models – Taverner (his five-part setting of *Dum transisset Sabbatum*), Tallis (*Vidente miraculum*), Bach (*Herr*

## Andrew Nethsingha and his forces are fully inside this exquisitely beautiful, sensual music

*Christ, der ein'ge Gottessohn*), Tippett *Plebs angelica* – for his own re-imaginings. In addition to the vocal items, Finnissy offers his own, complementary 'doubles' or variations in which melodic fragments, harmonies and textures are reworked. The organ doubles benefit from the luminous playing of Glen Dempsey, fast becoming one of



▲ 'A uniformly high standard of performance': the Choir of St John's College, Cambridge

the outstanding organists of his generation, who is joined at a second organ by James Anderson-Besant in the *Plebs angelica* – *alternativo*. Andrew Nethsingha and his forces are clearly fully inside this exquisitely beautiful, sensual music and produce a uniformly high standard of performance, as is to be expected from this address. While it's not music that reveals itself immediately, the opportunity to savour it repeatedly on CD is ideal. A fitting tribute to Finnissy's 75th birthday, which falls in 2021.

PHILIP REED

◀ 'spiralling ecstatically', e.e. cummings. Few composers could pull this off without sounding a bit pi, and few choirs could deliver it without a suspicion of cassocks and harps, but Donald Nally and The Crossing recognise the jazz fan in Primosch and give these astonishing works an earthy sway and groundedness that only enhances their essential spirituality. Neither composer nor choir is exactly short of accolades, but this bids fair to be contemporary choral record of the year.

BRIAN MORTON

### Bruckner: Mass in E minor; Stravinsky: Mass

Rundfunkchor Berlin, wind players of the Rundfunk-Sinfonieorchester Berlin / Gijs Leenaars (dir)

Pentatone PTC 5186 774 [53:10]

★★★★★



These two Masses work well together on disc or in concert: both share similar forces – choir (double choir for Bruckner) with wind accompaniment, and no soloists. In Bruckner's case, the use of wind instruments was a practical one, as the first performance venue was to be outdoors. Despite the practicalities of this solution, the use of wind instruments in sung Masses in Austria had a long tradition pre-Bruckner, where they filled in any missing or inadequately represented vocal lines. From the opening Kyrie, the Rundfunkchor Berlin show themselves well matched to Bruckner's unfolding lines and suspensions, as well as being quite the equal of his more dramatic writing, though just occasionally there are signs of vocal strain in the top sopranos.

Gijs Leenaars and his forces are just as much at home in Stravinsky's austere 1948 Mass – 'cold music that will appeal directly to the spirit' was how the composer described his setting. Leenaars's reading is beautifully captured in this recording, with a perfect balance between choir and wind ensemble.

PHILIP REED

### When Love Speaks – Choral Music by Owain Park

Epiphoni Consort / Tim Reader (dir)

Delphian DCD 34239 [76:59]

★★★★★



Listening to the extraordinarily accomplished works that are here recorded for the first time, it is hard to believe that at the time of writing their composer is still a few months off his 27th birthday.

But Owain Park has served a long apprenticeship as a musician, first as a chorister at St Mary Redcliffe in his home city of Bristol, then at Wells Cathedral School and Trinity College Cambridge, and now as director of male voice consort The Gesualdo Six, absorbing along the way a vast amount of experience as a choral singer and organist and building up a substantial portfolio of commissions, many of which are represented in this recording. He has developed a strong individual voice and even when presenting famous texts such as Shakespearean songs that countless composers have previously set, he has something new to say. There are many magical moments in this collection, including in some exquisite piano accompaniments. Park's skill in writing for voices is admirably demonstrated by the

excellent Epiphoni Consort, and the icing on this very satisfying cake is the burnished acoustics of St John's Church, Upper Norwood. Highly recommended.  
CLARE STEVENS

### Cyrrillus Kreek: The Suspended Harp of Babel

Vox Clamantis, Marco Ambrosini, Angela Ambrosini (nyckelharpa), Anna Liisa Eller (kannel) / Jaan-Eik Tulve (dir)  
ECM New Series 2620/4819041 [65:20]  
★★★★

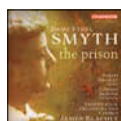


ECM's classical New Series owes much of its success to Estonian music,

with its early recordings of Arvo Pärt. Kreek is probably better known still in his homeland, where his folk-tinged sacred songs and settings are a key component of Estonia's choral tradition. Vox Clamantis are specialists in repertoire influenced by Gregorian chant and their readings of Kreek – punctuated by instrumental interludes and improvisations by the Ambrosinis – are both idiomatic and highly individual. Kreek can be samey and plodding if not done well but the choir gives these settings the necessary energy to bring them to life. The recording was made in Tallinn's beautiful Transfiguration Church.  
BRIAN MORTON

### Ethel Smyth: The Prison

Sarah Brailey (s), Dashton Burton (b-bar), Experiential Chorus and Orchestra / James Blachly (dir)  
Chandos CHSA 5279 [64:12]  
★★★★



So much larger than life that she exists as Edith Staines in E.F. Benson's *Dodo* tales, and as

Dame Hilda Tablet in Henry Reed's hilarious radio plays, Smyth hasn't always been treated with due seriousness. Ninety years after its Edinburgh premiere, *The Prison* is here recorded for the first time, and with total seriousness, by the Experiential Orchestra and Chorus. It follows a philosophical meditation by Henry Bennett Brewster recounting the thoughts of a man in solitary confinement, revisiting his life and preparing for death. At the end of her own musical life – deafness drove her to literature instead – Smyth was much influenced by neo-Platonism and appended a line from Plotinus to *The Prison*, suggesting that music was a means to releasing the divine in us. Soloists and chorus convey that very well, sustaining a tension between physicality and spirit that gives the recording an almost Mahlerian quality.  
BRIAN MORTON

### Eric Whitacre: The Sacred Veil

Los Angeles Master Chorale, Jeffrey Zeigler (vc), Lisa Edwards (pno) / Eric Whitacre (dir)  
Charles Anthony Silvestri (writer)  
Signum SIGCD 630 [56:40] (music); [22:55] (interview)  
★★★★



The story behind the single work presented here has such significance

for the composer-conductor Eric Whitacre and his friend and long-term librettist Charles Anthony Silvestri that critical analysis of the music seems inappropriate. *The Sacred Veil*, Whitacre's most extended work to date, is effectively a poignant secular requiem for Silvestri's wife, Julia, charting her illness and death from cancer and the shock and grief of her husband

and two young children as they travelled with her on the journey – as did Whitacre himself. More detail about the context and how the piece was put together was provided in our recent feature about the UK-based Eric Whitacre Singers (*C&O March* 2020); it is a work that will speak eloquently to modern generations and is performed here with great tenderness by the choir that gave the premiere in 2019.

CLARE STEVENS

### The Hours – Choral Music by Ben Parry

Choir of Royal Holloway, Liam Condon (org), Simon Marlow (pno) / Rupert Gough (dir)  
Signum Records SIGCD 629 [77:30]  
★★★★



A former Swingle Singer, Ben Parry is today one of the most experienced

choral conductors, composers and arrangers in the business. His vast hinterland of practical experience means he knows exactly what works on voices as well as what choirs enjoy singing. This CD offers no fewer than 23 of his original compositions or arrangements. Whether sacred or secular pieces, Parry's close attention to text serves him well and he always locates an apt musical response. His tonal language is easy on the ear, though some might find it a little overly sweet from time to time; the vocal writing, however, is never less than impeccably well-crafted (try his arrangement of 'Early One Morning'). Rupert Gough and the Royal Holloway Choir evidently revel in this CD of miniatures, which is perhaps best served by listening to four or five at a time.

PHILIP REED

### Hans Gál: Music for Voices, vol. 1

Borealis / Bridget Budge and Stephen Muir (dirs)  
Toccata Classics TOCC 0509 [66:37]  
★★★★



It pleased him to make a self-referential pun on 'madri-gal'. Hans

Gál believed there was a need to restore the joy in music-making, and the chamber choir Borealis brings that quality to these mostly premiere recordings. Only *Four Part-Songs* have been available previously, which seems extraordinary, given the accessibility and delight of this music. A Radio 3 'Composer of the Week' slot began a revival, but the work and the name are still only patchily recognised, except perhaps in Edinburgh, where he settled before wartime internment and where he taught until 1960. The op.19 *Motette* is the earliest and most 'European' of the works here, though the 1956 *Satirikon: Four Aphorisms*, to texts by Heine, Goethe, Fehre and Busch, sees him taking pleasure in his native tongue again. Borealis handle both German and English with equal aplomb and it's a delight to hear Gál being performed again.

BRIAN MORTON

### Saint Louis Premieres

Saint Louis Chamber Chorus / Philip Barnes (dir)  
Regent Records REGCD 541 [69:43]  
★★★★



Successful commissioning choirs often suffer from an

embarrassment of riches, accumulating bundles of new work that eventually need the seal of a recording. These can be bitty affairs, eclectic to a fault, but >



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◀ important as documentation. So it is with *Saint Louis Premieres*. The best is very good indeed. Judith Bingham's *Ceaslessly weaving your name* is the reunion of Odysseus and Penelope, told from the distaff (literally) side. It sits well alongside Clare Maclean's *That I did always love* and Ēriks Ešenvalds's *On Friendship* (one of two fine pieces by the Latvian), but the remainder is much more various in quality as well as style. Robert Walker's *The Ale Songbook*, while a gift for all beer drinkers, doesn't quite belong here, plonked straight after Jon Garrett's *Drink to me only with thine eyes*. The energy and commitment of the choir holds it all together, though, and they redeem the day with the closing *Suite Remembrance* by Melissa Dunphy.

BRIAN MORTON

### From Five Continents – Choral Music and Songs by Penelope Thwaites

Carolyn Sampson (s), James Gilchrist (t), William Dazeley (bar), Ex Cathedra / Jeffrey Skidmore (dir)

Somm SOMMCD 0612 [72:06]

★★★



Penelope Thwaites is best known as a concert pianist, but she explains

in her liner note that she improvised at the piano as a child, worked with choirs at school and university and has a life-long fascination with the beauty of words that probably comes from being the daughter of a poet. Charming settings of three of her father's love songs are included in this anthology of sacred and secular pieces, many of which were written for special events such as the weddings of friends. Thwaites's style is unashamedly conventional

(even in the songs inspired by India, Australia and Africa) but sincere and eloquent, and her music is treated seriously by these top-notch performers – the result is extremely attractive.

CLARE STEVENS

### Arvo Pärt: Stabat Mater

Gloriae dei Cantores / Richard K. Pugsley (dir)

Naxos PARCD 65 [69:02]

★★★



This is a very polished recording, confidently

performed and sumptuously produced. It is presented as a celebration of Pärt's music and an exploration of his compositional techniques, notably his use of tintinnabuli and the dramatic effect of silence. Other reviewers might give it an additional star, but for me several of the tracks failed to convey a sense of spirituality, which I found surprising in a choir that leads worship on a weekly basis in the Church of the Transfiguration, Orleans, Massachusetts.

CLARE STEVENS

## DVDS

### Symphonic Splendor: Masterworks for Organ & Orchestra

Peter Richard Conte, Wanamaker organ, Macy's, Philadelphia; Opera Company of Philadelphia, Symphony in C / Rossen Milanov (dir)

Raven OAR-159 (DVD+CD)

[126:09; 79:24]

★★★



Any opportunity to hear the mighty 28,750-pipe, VI/729 Wanamaker organ in Macy's department store

in Philadelphia is to be welcomed. Here it is heard in an Anglo-French orchestra-accompanied programme with resident organist Peter Richard Conte and Rossen Milanov conducting the New Jersey-based Symphony in C.

Taken from a concert in 2014, also heard on the accompanying CD, the DVD includes recently filmed extras whetting the appetite (despite their brevity) for more, regrettably, than the music components offer.

On paper, Poulenc's strings and timpani-accompanied G minor Concerto, Elgar's *Cockaigne Overture* and Fourth *Pomp and Circumstance March* and Saint-Saëns's ever-vivacious 'Organ' Symphony ought to have delivered something special.

Instead, Milanov's smoothly marshalled orchestra dictates pace and tone, Conte reluctant to seize even those grandstanding moments afforded the organ by Poulenc and Saint-Saëns.

A delightful bonus is film of a 2010 flash-mob rendition of Handel's 'Hallelujah' chorus featuring 650 choristers in spontaneous voice.

Curious directorial choices favour close-ups of orchestra sections and audience, and wide, restlessly shifting panoramas of the seven-storey Grand Court atrium of Macy's admittedly impressive flagship store.

While we get extreme (if almost anonymously brief) close-ups of Conte's hands at the console, there's little to show how he employs the organ's 729 stops, 168 piston buttons and 42 pedals.

Short documentary inserts compensate with historic interest: the first showing restorative gold-leaf gilding of the organ's pipes, another featuring Wanamaker's voice on Edison cylinders and fleeting archive footage.

More informative is a longer

history of the organ's Friends society, touching upon the instrument's building for the 1904 St Louis World Fair, its relocation – courtesy of retail magnate John Wanamaker – to Philadelphia, and its subsequent evolution into the world's largest musical instrument.

Admirers of the organ will find the extensive *Curator's Tour* DVD produced by the Friends society and featuring Wanamaker guru Curt Mangel more satisfying or will want to wait for the forthcoming DVD portrait of the organ, *A Sonic Odyssey*, on Raven, a preview of which is included here.

MICHAEL QUINN

## ORGAN MUSIC

### Georg Schmitt: Prélude (Procession)

Edition Dohr 17965, £7.50

### Lothar Graap: Concertino in vier Sätzen für Truhenorgel

Edition Dohr 19028, £9.95

### Walter Gleißner: Concertino für Truhenorgel

Edition Dohr 19019, £9.95

### Dan Locklair: Noel's Psalm (A Sonata for Organ)

Subito Music Publishing, US\$19.95

### Robert J. Powell: Six Voluntaries for Organ

Morning Star, US\$14.00

Georg Schmitt's **Prélude (Procession)** takes itself quite seriously, opening in full funereal *pomposo* mode in C minor with a succession of short phrases in which harmonic development is clearly not a priority. Things ▶



## CHORAL SELECTION

## Joy Hill and Jeremy Jackman round up Christmas works received in recent months



It is difficult to plan Christmas programmes for youth choirs at this time, but publishers are offering online options to help those running virtual choir rehearsals. If you are seeking teaching aids for virtual choral projects and also socially distanced events, a great quality resource and helping hand for school and youth choirs, community choirs and choral groups is

Charles Beale and Steve Milloy's **Popular Voiceworks at Christmas**. (Mixed voices; Oxford University Press (OUP) ISBN 9780193522671, £37.95). The 20 pieces – all photocopiable – are supported by suggestions for efficient learning and the book includes a backing track disk. There are refreshing new takes on so much of the standard Christmas repertoire, including one that I find especially ingenious – 'In the bleak mid-winter', arranged in a gentle 'pop-rock' style. Less commonly performed seasonal songs include 'I'm still missing you' with a 'feel-good R&B-tinged pop ballad' voice, which will be loved by youth choirs. The arrangements ooze with the experience of expert writers highly regarded for their work in developing stylistic diversity within music education in the UK and US.

With the smaller range of timbre possible for upper voices, it is good sometimes to include compositions with added instrumentation for contrast and, in some cases, to support the harmonic writing. Sarah Quartel's **This endris night** (SSAA, unacc., + instrs (opt.); OUP, £2.20) is a mesmerising piece with attractive instrumental options for handbells, organ or percussion. This would work well with a larger group but is also particularly effective with a very small ensemble, with its close, folk-like harmonies which will be satisfying to fine-tune. A recording of this and all the latest OUP Christmas publications is online and will be a welcome teaching aid for singers unable to learn together in a group.

To add flair and weight to a Christmas programme, try Thomas Hyde's powerful and provoking **Tomorrow Shall Be My Dancing Day** (SSA & org.; Cadenza Music CAZTHTDD01, £2.99). With its chromatic organ writing, mixed-metre setting and occasional dissonant harmonies, it is dramatic yet always sits comfortably for the developing voice. It is not too difficult to perform yet sounds very impressive – but you will need an excellent organist.

For an a cappella piece, I would strongly recommend **We Saw Thee** by Raymond Yiu (SSA, unacc.; Cadenza Music CAZRYWST01, £2.25). Premiered by the BBC Singers in 2018, it also features in the contemporary carol anthology *The Nativity Star* (David Wordsworth, ed.; Cadenza CAZVARNAT01 £12.99). Using words from the *Shepherd's Hymn* by metaphysical poet Richard Crashaw, it is tonally quite ambiguous, moving fluidly between contrasting key centres before closing on a gorgeous, unexpected shift in a contemporary jazz idiom. This is a small gem of a piece with a warm positive vibe – definitely something to aspire to performing with a female ensemble.

JOY HILL



In his setting of the familiar medieval text **There Is No Rose** (SATB and SATB semi-chorus; Cadenza CAZPCTNR01, £2.25), Phillip Cooke allots the Latin last line of each verse to a distant semi-chorus or quartet, singing exactly the same music each time. The main body of the choir starts with simple homophonic music that gradually rises in intensity through the verses,

giving the words an uncluttered canvas to tell their story. (The text contains some curious anomalies: verse 1 has acquired an extra syllable, while verse 2 has lost its verb and its rhyme with the omission of 'was'.) The conclusion is a most effective 'fade-out' for the small group. This version may be a useful addition to other settings of these words, so that four or five might form a running theme through a Christmas concert.

I'm a great fan of Gabriel Jackson's music, and **I sing the birth was born tonight** (SATB & org; OUP, £3.05) contains many of the ingredients that we find in his most successful pieces. There is a virtuoso organ part, and the vocal lines are robustly rhythmic. The structure is tried and tested, though right at the end, texture, tonality and melody all change – a welcome device, neatly managed.

Peter Gritton has taken on board the historical background to Longfellow's poem **Christmas Bells**, and given us a dramatic portrayal in which the bass drum is crucial (SATB, org + bs drum; Stainer & Bell CN35P, £2.50). There is rhythmic vitality, a colourful organ part, and melodies that take us on a journey – an excellent piece of story-telling.

Judith Weir's **O Mercy Divine** (SATB + solo vc; Chester CH87791, £2.99), to words by Charles Wesley, was commissioned to mark the centenary of the Festival of Nine Lessons and Carols at King's College Cambridge, and received its first performance on Christmas Eve 2018. The work is scored for choir and cello solo, which for the most part busily impels this *siciliano* on its way. The choral texture never varies: either the upper and lower voices answer one another, or they sing all together. Personally I long for some change to this pattern by the end of verse 4 (of 9), and feel that the different nature of the cello part at this point does not of itself offer enough that is new.

Toby Young's **Advent Carol** (SATB unacc; Cadenza CAZTYADC01, £2.25) has a wonderful text, rooted in the natural world, by Kevin Crossley-Holland. The contemporary harmonies arise quite naturally from the melodic lines, and the principal of these are taken mostly by sopranos and tenors. But the basses are key (sorry) to the whole business: they must sing their one-note-per-three-time-bar with spring-heeled alacrity to propel the piece forward to a fine, warm climax.

Ian Crawford has given us a lively new arrangement of the **Sussex Carol** (SATB & pno/org; OUP, £2.55), with an accompaniment that is genuinely suitable for either piano or organ. He tinkers teasingly with the rhythm of the original tune, and enjoys himself creating canons and, at one point, a sort of bogus cantus firmus. Such fun!

JEREMY JACKMAN

◀ perk up a bit when the relative major arrives, like the villain in a minor Rossini opera, bringing a left-hand semiquaver figure which is then combined with a reprise of the main theme, before a coda rounds things off. It's a piece which aims high and in all honesty almost misses the target, never mind the bullseye. But there's fun to be had nonetheless; a player who enjoys the *Suite Gothique* will find things to admire here.

The next two offerings from Edition Dohr – Lothar Graap's

**Concertino in vier Sätzen für Truhenorgel** and Walter Gleißner's **Concertino für Truhenorgel** are much more strait-laced. Both are written for chest or chamber organ (Gleißner's suggestion that one might use a Cimbelsstern here and there seems a forlorn one, in the organological circumstances) and plough a very competently managed neo-classical compositional furrow – motivically impeccable, a bit like slightly less austere Distler. Both have recourse to hymnody for thematic material (Gleißner's work exclusively), both include a set of variations in the formal scheme, and both have a good grasp of the possibilities – and limitations – of their chosen medium. It will not come as a surprise to learn that only a handful of stops is required by either work. Gleißner writes here and there for divided registers (although the piece can be managed without); Graap, whose registration scheme otherwise verges on the finicky, states that he has an instrument with this possibility in mind, but then rather curiously fails to exploit it. Useful pieces, well-written, and of modest difficulty.

Dan Locklair's **Noel's Psalm (A Sonata for Organ)** is a very



much more substantial proposition, a four-movement work lasting some 14 minutes. The composer suggests that two manuals are sufficient, but the writing really does seem to call for as much colour and timbral variety as can be mustered – a full registration scheme is supplied. The second and fourth movements – 'Scherzo' and 'Dance' – need some agility and considerable finesse in articulation, but the others make less strenuous demands (although Locklair's trademark pedal *glissandi* and manual *tremoli* put in an appearance here and there). The work is conceived cyclically, but there seems no good reason why individual movements can't be performed alone. The idiom is engaging, lyrical (the rise and fall, both melodic and structural, of the 'Aria' is beautifully managed) and propulsive by turns, and accessibly 'contemporary' in a way which will not deter an audience. It would make an impressive recital piece.

Robert J. Powell's collection of **Six Voluntaries for Organ** is rooted firmly in traditional compositional practice, and none the worse for that. It's music which has no great pretensions,

but rather inhabits a world of fluent and often charming easefulness; all the pieces would make excellent voluntary material. The 'Allegretto', in 6/8, has a few pitfalls, but otherwise everything is well within the grasp of a modest technique; three manuals are suggested, but with a little adaption everything is possible on two.

STEPHEN FARR

## CHORAL MUSIC

### Joseph Haydn: Die Jahreszeiten (The Seasons) Hob. XXI:3

Ernst Hertrich (ed.)

STB soli, SATB chorus (div) & orch.

Carus Verlag full score 51.980,

€95.00



Haydn's oratorio *The Seasons* was composed on the back of the success of *The Creation*.

Once again, the librettist was Gottfried van Swieten. *The Creation* follows a biblical narrative whereas *The Seasons* is based on a verse epic by the Scottish poet James Thomson. Swieten translated, shortened, re-versed, and added to Thomson's masterpiece; he also appended invasive compositional suggestions to his libretto. I can only imagine Haydn's withering acquiescence to Swieten's 'mansplaining' of the need to imitate burbling streams and twittering birds, as well as instructions as to which stanzas demanded recitative (and, of those, which should be dry or accompanied), not to mention insidious suggestions of when to introduce fugal passages. The diversity of the subject matter of *The Seasons* appealed to early-19th-century audiences,

and the music's immediacy and Haydn's powers of invention (without Swieten's help) were the marketing tools used by the work's publishers, Breitkopf & Härtel. The descriptions above the preludes to each season give an idea of the musico-poetic ideal behind the oratorio as a whole: 'Passage from Winter to Spring'; 'Summer Dawn'; 'Satisfaction at an abundant Harvest'; and 'Thick Winter Fogs'. Romanticism in a nutshell.

This new Carus edition of *The Seasons* is underlaid with English words as well as German. The English text is not Swieten's own dodgy translation, but the late-19th-century Novello one – and it does the job. Indeed, if you already know an English version of *The Seasons*, then it is likely to be this one. Carus's editor for this project is the venerable Ernst Hertrich, whose work you may know from his many editions for Henle of music by, for instance, Haydn, Mozart, Beethoven, Mendelssohn, Schumann, Chopin, Liszt, Brahms, and Grieg. There is a lengthy and exhaustive critical commentary at the back of the full score (very welcome, of course), but what is even more welcome is that really important variants are given in staff notation at the foot of each page of the score. Not that conductors won't work through every detail of the critical commentary while they're preparing for a performance – of course we will! – but it is extremely useful to have FAQs answered in musical notation at a glance.

My love of this piece and my respect for this new edition have been enhanced by the circumstances in which we currently find ourselves. *The Seasons* celebrates the annual cycle of nature and human

▶



GRYFFINDOR



▲ The Redoute wing of the Hofburg Palace in Vienna, where the public premiere took place in 1801 of Haydn's *The Seasons*

◁ response to it. This year, in the northern hemisphere, we have had a muted spring and many summer pursuits are banished to a breakout room. Haydn's gloriously colourful oratorio has hitherto promoted in me a yearning for the values and ideals of early romanticism and the Enlightenment. Right now it makes me nostalgic for choir rehearsals back in early March and opinionated musical discussions in the pub: 'Surely *The Creation* is a better oratorio than *The Seasons*'; 'Well, it's certainly better known, but...'. There will be a time when voices and orchestras will combine again in the concert hall (and the pub), and performances of Haydn's *The Seasons* will be particularly relevant and life-affirming in a post-lockdown world.

Haydn's music should, of course, speak for itself, but Carus has made its performing materials of *The Seasons* look and feel extremely attractive. Dr Hertrich has done an admirable editorial job. The full score (1.5 inches thick) is a weighty tome,

but one that makes you want to ease this heavy purple volume from the shelf and submit to its kaleidoscopic musical contents even when you have a mountain of other music to learn. Facsimiles aside, this is one of the favourite scores in my possession.

JEREMY SUMMERLY

## BOOKS

### Organ & Interpretation: The French École Classique

Paolo Crivellaro  
Blockwerk Editiones BE 01.E.01  
(2020), ISBN 978-3-9821872-0-4,  
368 pp, 274 mus. exx, 27 illus,  
p/b £37.12,  
[www.organ-interpretation.com](http://www.organ-interpretation.com)



This is a very useful book. Performance of French baroque organ music requires a number of issues to be understood and then interpreted: the organ, registration, liturgical context, ornamentation, rhythmic issues

such as *notes inégales*, and the stylistic models such as dances, French *airs* and opera, and Italian vocal and instrumental music, which had influence on particular pieces. All the relevant information is scattered in prefaces to the *livres d'orgue*, pedagogical treatises, dictionaries and liturgical ceremonials, and the issues arising have been discussed in the wide range of literature published over the last half-century. The great virtue of Paolo Crivellaro's book is that many of the primary sources have been brought together in one monograph, quoted both in the original language and in translation, thereby making an excellent reference book for students of this fascinating repertoire.

The chronological span extends from the beginning of the 17th to the late 18th centuries, from Eustache du Caurroy (1549-1609) to Balbastre (1724-99), with brief biographical details of composers, a full list of their organ works, and the

instruments (with specifications) that they played. Details of the major manuscript collections, such as the *Livre d'orgue de Montréal* and the important collections by Louis Couperin and Marchand, are included under 'Sources'. Moreover, the specifications of six important historic organs are included, all now restored to their 18th-century condition.

Most chapters on interpretative topics such as ornamentation, fingering, tempi and *notes inégales* have been covered previously in somewhat greater depth, but in 'The *Alternatim* Practice' relevant sections of ecclesiastical ceremonials relating to music from different cathedrals help to fill out the national picture of varying liturgical practices and the musical requirements for organists.

The music itself is divided according to genre: *Plein jeu*, *Grand jeu*, *Fond d'orgue* and *Jeu doux*, *Fugue*, *Duo*, *Trio*, *Quatuor*, *Récit de dessus*, *Récit en taille* and *Basse*, for each of which the author provides comprehensive quotations from prefaces of appropriate registrations (with alternatives) and manners of performance. There is, nevertheless, the opportunity for further and deeper study. For example, while there are references to dance and to Italian music, there is scope to consider these features in greater detail, and specifically their influence on particular organ pieces.

With so many sources quoted, supplemented by a generous array of musical examples and a very useful bibliography, this book is highly recommended, particularly to those whose knowledge of French baroque organ music is limited.

DAVID PONSFORD

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# ENCOUNTERS

ANNA LAPWOOD, DIRECTOR OF MUSIC, PEMBROKE COLLEGE, CAMBRIDGE



HUGH WARWICK

I'd got much better at not drinking coffee until this week! We've just finished a 48-hour organ virtual Bach-a-thon, to raise money for rural communities in Zambia. I'd said, "Leave it to me, it shouldn't be too much work..." I set up a giant spreadsheet, and people filled in a Google form saying what they wanted to play. Everyone recorded their recitals in advance and sent them to me, and I edited them all into six 4-hour videos. I then tried to allocate when they'd be played according to time zones, so performers could watch and listen in real time with their friends and families and chat about the music. In normal life we'd never be able to get together 60 organists – including some of the biggest names in the world – all in one place.

There's a bit of added pressure when you film in advance, wanting to get the perfect take – it can be hard. And technology can go wrong: Facebook randomly cut three hours of recording at 1am, and I had to re-export half the video to get it working again, which I finally managed at 2.40am.

At the start, lockdown was tough: like many others, I'd lost all my work and was

finding it hard to motivate myself. Then two of my Pembroke choirs community – a Chapel Choir soprano who is a junior doctor, and the mother of one of the Girls' Choir working on a Covid-19 ward at Addenbrooke's Hospital – got in touch and said hospital morale was low and they thought a musical stimulus would be good for them. So I started a virtual NHS choir; 300 people signed up in the first two days, and it now has 1,000 members across the UK. It changed my week completely: I'd been isolating by myself, and hadn't spoken to anyone except by phone, and now Friday evening rehearsals became the highlight of my week. I was doing what mattered to me: reconnecting with the music community, and making a difference through music.

I don't think it's a bad thing to record a virtual choir, but the key thing for me is that there has to be enough rehearsal to make the process enjoyable. The NHS Choir had ten weeks rehearsing for one recording – an arrangement of 'Over the rainbow' by Bobby Goulder – and are now working on a Covid-19 version of 'Come on, Eileen' written by two of our doctors. Rehearsals are about so much

more than making music; the singers chat and get to know each other in the comments section, which has been lovely to watch. This group have never heard each other sing – they've just sung along with me playing the piano and picking out their parts. We aim to keep it going after lockdown, and hope to meet up together for a Big Sing once a year.

I've also run virtual rehearsals with the Pembroke choirs during lockdown. I didn't know if they'd be useful, but they were the saving grace – although you can't hear each other, you can learn music, do vocal exercises, and get a collective sense of rehearsal. Virtual choir recordings emphasise the end product as opposed to the process of rehearsing, which a few of the choir said they found detrimental to their mental health: watching and listening to themselves singing, trying to get it right, and noticing every single mistake. In a normal choir, if you're struggling you can depend on those around you; but in a virtual choir you've lost your support network. In the Pembroke virtual rehearsals, they work along with me singing and playing the piano; they're aware that no one can hear them and so there's no sense of judgement or pressure to be perfect.

And their first CD has just arrived [*All things are quite silent*, Signum SIGCD 642]. It's a mixture of chapel and concert repertoire, to show the choir in different ways. It opens with a piece by Kerry Andrew which has a seascape going all through it, and the choir replicates the sound of wind and waves.

Virtual choirs have given me renewed appreciation for normal rehearsals – I'm going to take a bit more time to enjoy them, instead of just getting ready for a service. And, never having live-streamed services before, we now do it twice a week and realise we can reach people who might be nervous about coming to Chapel otherwise – joining a virtual service anonymously is somehow easier than walking through the chapel door.

Everything's changing so rapidly, it's hard to tell what it will be like in October when we get back to university. I desperately hope we can have some form of choir, but I don't think it's going to look like the normal choir for quite some while. ■

*Anna Lapwood was talking to the Editor.*

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